Death and Mr Pickwick

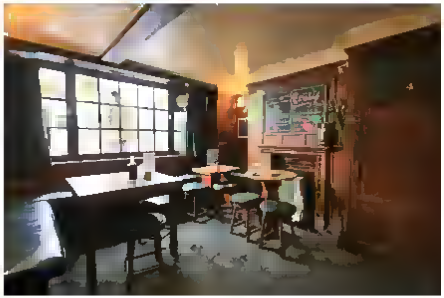
Chronicles - Volume 3

by Stephen Jarvis

Jul 30

- Here is a post by Peter Stadlera on a Bath pub which appears towards the end of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, when Moses Pickwick holds a reunion of his old coach drivers. This meeting completes one of the longest "arcs" in the book - stretching from the crushed coaching bugle at the very start of the novel, to the mention of a man who crushes a bugle in a vice at this reunion.

- "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about the Old Green Tree public house in Bath. Well, let's go to this pub...The Old Green Tree is a classic English pub, serving a number of real ales.

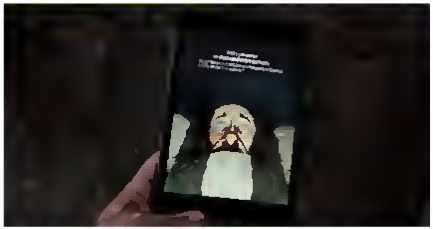


- "The beam running across the middle of the bar marks the old back wall of the pub. In 1923, the pub was extended to the format it now has, and oak panelling and wooden floors were put in. The craftsmen involved took enormous care with their work, as can be seen from even a cursory examination of the joining and finishing. The pub has hardly been altered since that time. It boasts three oak panelled rooms and colourful paper money decorates the ceiling and walls.

- "Named as the Bath Town Pub of the Year in 2008, the pub is located in a building that dates back to the 18th century and it has probably been a pub for the past 250 years. Located on Green Street, a small street that runs between Broad and Millsom Street, the pub has a simple frontage with two chalkboards listing the beers and...

- "...food available that day. Stephen says he has drunk in as many Pickwickian pubs as possible - so why not follow his example by starting your own *Death and Mr Pickwick* pub trail! Cheers!"

July 30

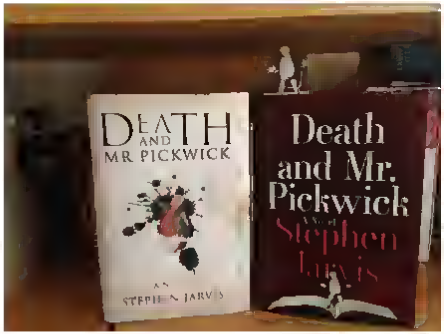


This fiction app will scare the Dickens out of you | Cult of Mac

iClassics offers a growing collection of interactive reading apps including Dickens, Poe and Lovecraft.

- Michael Segers has posted this about a new way of experiencing the Dickens story *The Madman's Manuscript*, one of the interpolated tales in *The Pickwick Papers*.
- http://www.cultofmac.com/379698/this-fiction-app-will-scare-the-dickens-out-of-you/
- The story was once cited as evidence in a divorce trial in the USA, when a wife accused her husband of unreasonable behaviour, because he forced her to read the tale on her wedding night. As the tale deals with the death of a bride at the hands of a madman one can certainly see she had grounds for divorce!

July 30



- Jamie Johnston, the winner of the eating & drinking category in the Great *Death and Mr Pickwick* Photo Competition has just received his prize, and says that Mr Pickwick feels right at home...

July 31

- Here I am at the place where it all began: the village of Pickwick, Wiltshire, where, in 1694, a baby was found abandoned, and - as was a common practice in those days - given the surname of the place where he was discovered. When the babe grew up, he became the first Mr Pickwick. It is believed that, with few exceptions, all people with the surname "Pickwick" are descended from this foundling. (And the few exceptions were probably immigrants who took the name from *The Pickwick Papers* - and so, in a sense, their surname derives from the foundling too.)

- I had been invited to give a talk about *Death and Mr Pickwick* to the Corsham Civic Society - Corsham being the wider district which encompasses Pickwick. My original plan was to take pictures throughout Corsham and Pickwick, but unfortunately there was a heavy downpour when I arrived, and I had to abandon that plan. So, I got just a few pictures, snapped the next morning, just before I caught the train home. But anyway, here you will see me outside the Hare and Hounds - the pub run by the foundling's grandson - which features in *Death and Mr Pickwick*.

- Also, I briefly visited The Corsham Bookshop, run by the lady who put me up overnight, the very lovely Janet Brakspear.

- We paused at Corsham Court, which Seymour visits in *Death and Mr Pickwick*. In Seymour's time, the gallery of paintings at Corsham Court was reckoned the second finest public art collection in the country.

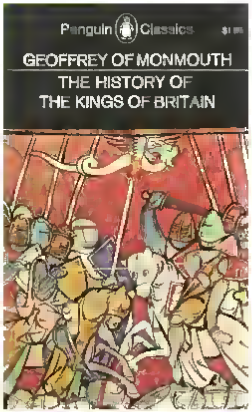
- Finally, here I am posing outside the door of the church which is right beside Corsham Court - the village of Pickwick doesn't have a church of its own, so at this church, St Bartholomew's, the foundling would have been have been baptised "Moses Pickwick".

- And the talk itself? I gave a strong emphasis to local matters, as I was addressing a local society, and I spoke at some length about the Pickwick family. Readers of *Death and Mr Pickwick* will know that the Mr Pickwick who ran the Hare and Hounds pub had a most extraordinary voice - a deep bass one moment, and a high squeak the next - and I described this to the Corsham Civic Society as "like a combination of Barry White and Mickey Mouse in one person."
- And they in return told me something I did not know, which was also on the subject of surnames. Towards the end of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I mention a housekeeper, Mrs Hancock, who looks after Mr Pickwick (of the Hare and Hounds) in his last days. The surname of Hancock is apparently very common in the Corsham area.

July 31

- This pic was taken in Michael Segers' back yard. It's his tribute to Chunee, the elephant that appears in *Death and Mr Pickwick*.

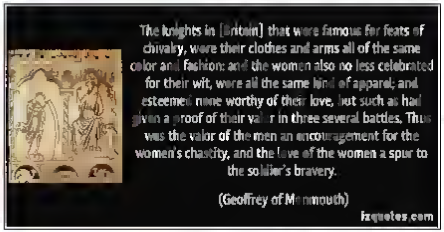
July 31



- Geoffrey of Monmouth, who appears in Peter Stadler's latest post, was for me an important person to mention in *Death and Mr Pickwick*
- I remember hearing the former curator of the Dickens Museum, the late Dr David Parker, speak about *Pickwick* and he said that whatever Seymour contributed to *The Pickwick Papers*, it didn't really matter, because Dickens's work was the thing. Parker claimed that it was rather like Shakespeare working from old chroniclers and previously existing plays – it was Shakespeare's genius that was important, not the fact that he had source material. This strikes me as missing the point – because there is a world of difference between working from source material provided by a dead chronicler, like Geoffrey of Monmouth, whose work you have chosen to use, and having a living person by your side, directing the work of art you are creating. To make this important distinction, I had Geoffrey of Monmouth arise in the course of a conversation between Dickens's biographer John Forster and *Pickwick*'s publisher Edward Chapman,

- Peter Stadlera: "In *Deoth ond Mr Pickwick* we come across the phrase '*King Leor* without Geoffrey of Monmouth', and we wonder about both Lear and Geoffrey.

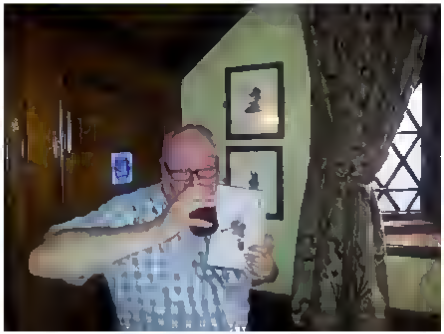
- "The story of King Lear and his three daughters is an old tale, well known in England for centuries before Shakespeare wrote the definitive play on the subject. The first English account of Lear can be found in the *History of the Kings of Britoin* (*Historio regum Britonnioe*), written by Geoffrey Monmouth in 1135.


The knights in [Britain] that were famous for feats of chivalry, wore their clothes and arms all of the same color and fashion: and the women also no less celebrated for their wit, were all the same kind of apparel: and esteemed none worthy of their love, but such as had given a proof of their valor in three several battles. Thus was the valor of the men an encouragement for the women's chastity, and the love of the women a spur to the soldier's bravery.
(Geoffrey of Monmouth)
izquotes.com

- "Monmouth's account spawned several 16th-century narratives about Lear, including renderings in Holinshed's Chronicles (first edition, 1577) and in *The Mirror for Magistrates* (1574). Even the great poet Edmund Spenser recounted Lear's tragedy in Canto 10, Book II of *The Faerie Queen* (1590). All of the aforementioned versions of the tale, and possibly dozens more, were readily available to Shakespeare and shaped the main plot of his own drama. However, it is clear that Shakespeare relied chiefly on *King Leir*, fully titled *The True Chronicle History of King Leir, and his three daughters, Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella*, the anonymous play published twelve years before the first recorded performance of Shakespeare's *King Lear*.

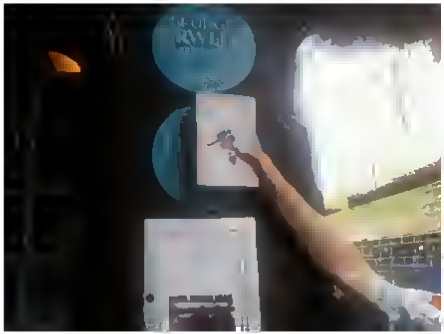
- "Leir, having been badly treated by his elder daughters and their husbands, the Dukes of Cornwall and Albany, defeats them with the help of Cordella and her husband; however, after Leir's death, Cordella is defeated and imprisoned by her nephews, and she kills herself. Geoffrey (shown here in a stained glass window at Monmouth) embedded the folktale motif in a 'historical' account, warning of the consequences of a divided kingdom, and tying the story in with known places: Leir 'built upon the river Sore a City called in the British Tongue Kaerleir, in the Saxon Leircestre' (Leicester)."

August 1



- I recently spent a day conducting extensive Pickwickian research in London with my old friend Steve Colquhoun. Today, and over the next few days, I shall publish the results of our groundbreaking scientific and historical explorations.
- We began our research at The Wheatsheaf in Rathbone Place.

- This is a pub which was around in the time of Dickens and Seymour, and you will notice on the wall two Pickwickian pictures, featuring Mr Jingle and Sam Weller's father.



- But the pub has another connection to *Death and Mr Pickwick*, because George Orwell used to drink there - from whom, of course, we get *Big Brother*, the inspiration for the reality TV series which I freely acknowledge was an influence on *Death and Mr Pickwick*.
- Indeed, Orwell once wrote an essay about Dickens, in which he declared that *Pickwick* was Dickens's greatest success, because it was free of Dickens's central weakness, the melodramatic plot. In *Pickwick*, said Orwell, "the characters simply go on and on, behaving like idiots, in a kind of eternity."
- You may be wondering, though, about the plaque I am covering up. This is for Dylan Thomas, another of The Wheatsheaf's regulars. I didn't think there was any connection between Thomas and *Pickwick*, but..

- ....when I got home, I discovered that Thomas had made a recording, *Mr Pickwick's Christmas*, in which he reads from Chapters 28 and 29 of *The Pickwick Papers*, featuring the Christmas party scenes, and the tale of the goblins. So Thomas too was imbued with Pickwickian spirit.
- (And probably any other form of alcohol...)

August 1

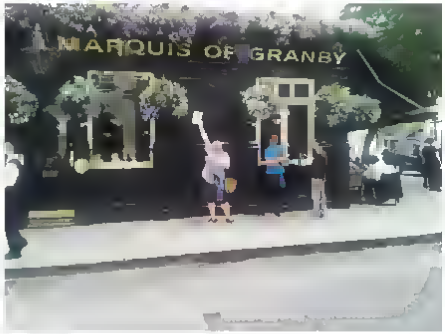
By Oliver Pritchett

7 14PM BST 01 Aug 2015

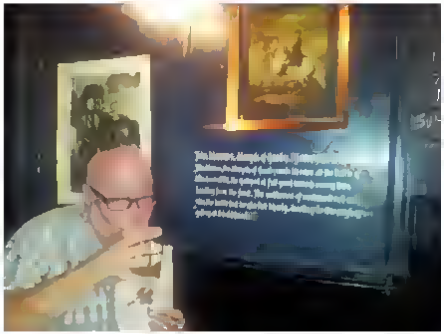
- *Death and Mr Pickwick* has just been namedropped in an article by Oliver Pritchett in the *Daily Telegraph*. This is what he says:
- "This next passport will certainly be my last. That doesn't bother me at all. My mother-in-law, when she was only in her sixties, used to say, "This will see me out", when she bought a king-size packet of detergent or a multi-pack of toilet rolls. I am much more of an optimist than she was; I have just started reading *Death and Mr Pickwick*, a novel by Stephen Jarvis, and it's 802 pages long."

August 2

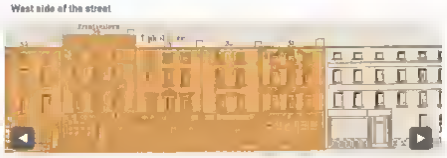
- Continuing the account of my Pickwickian excursion in London with my old friend Steve Colquhoun...
- Very close to The Wheatsheaf was another pub, The Marquis of Granby. Although this specific pub didn't feature in *The Pickwick Papers*, the name did, and we can see this in Phiz's illustration, showing the Marquis of Granby in Dorking.



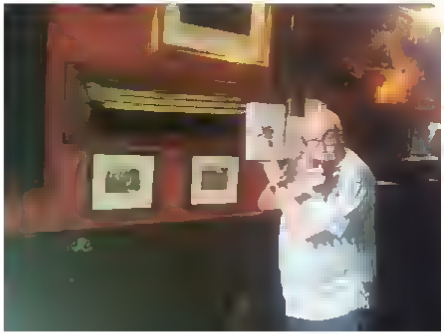
- The real Marquis of Granby, the British commander in the Seven Years' War, was very popular with his troops, and in the time of Seymour and Dickens many pubs bore his name, and quite a few survive to this day.



- Afterwards, we walked along Rathbone Place. This area was devasted in the Second World War, and is undergoing major development today, so there was little to see apart from scaffolding and hoardings, but one can get a good idea of its old appearance at the website:
- http://crowd.museumoflondon.org.uk/lsv1840/thoroughfare/18/rathbone_place/division1.html
- This has a rolling street view of Rathbone Place in 1840.



- No 34, owned by the Fuller brothers, is featured in *Death and Mr Pickwick* - it was the location of the Temple of Fancy, otherwise known as the Gallery of the Fine Arts, the art supplies shop where R W Buss buys materials needed to etch his *Pickwick* plates.



- The other side of the street can also be seen at the website, and The Wheatsheaf was at No 25, though described simply as "Wine Vaults" in the accompanying key. The rigours of this historical research, though, had built up a powerful thirst. A glimpse of the miniaturised hull of Nelson's flagship HMS Victory in the nearby Duke of York was enough to lure us in...
- I will continue my account of our research tomorrow.

August 3

- Onward with the Pickwickian tour...
- We were now getting hungry, and so we made our way to a pub named after that symbol of eating, Jack Horner, who gets a mention in *The Pickwick Papers* as "the patron saint of fat boys - the immortal Horner."
- Of course, they serve pies!

- And of course, thinking of Jack Horner, where else would one eat but in a CORNER seat? Here I am embarking on a steak and ale pie, delicately exploring the caramelised shallots, button mushrooms in mustard and ESB ale which enliven the world inside the crust.

- But on with our mission! One of the most important parts of *Death and Mr Pickwick* concerns the tragic life of the drunken clown JS Grimaldi. It was just a few days after drawing the picture of the dying clown in *The Pickwick Papers* that Seymour shot himself. The clown's last performance took place at the Tottenham Street Theatre, which no longer survives, but it was located on the site of Scala House, 21 Tottenham Street.

- Just a short distance away, at 24 Pitt Street, was the place where the clown died. The street was renamed Scala Street, and although houses from Grimaldi's era do survive in the street, No 24 is not one of them, but it was roughly in the location shown.

- Once again, the exertions of historical research left us overheated and parched, and we sought refreshment in The Hope. I do not know whether this pub was around in the time of JS Grimaldi, but rest assured that if it had been, he would have drunk there. (Well, there, and any other hostelry that happened to be open, and was prepared to let him in.)
- More tomorrow.

August 3

- The Rochester Bridge Trust, who entered a brilliant picture in the recent photo competition, have just posted this picture. This chair was made at the very furniture factory where Robert Seymour's father worked. This is what they say:
- "Thank you very much to Stephen Jarvis, the author of *Death and Mr Pickwick* for this signed copy of his book which features Rochester Bridge. We think it sits very well on one of our Seddon chairs, an item of furniture that could be considered a turning point at the start of the story."

August 3

- Here's another of the great Peter Stadlera's posts, deepening our understanding of the locations featured in *Death and Mr Pickwick*:
- "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* a headmaster of a school in Camberwell regards Mr Pickwick as a friend of Camberwell as 'in addition to his research on the Hampstead Ponds, he conducted research of an unspecified nature, in our area'. Camberwell Green is a small patch of common land in Camberwell, South London.

- "It lies at the junction of Camberwell Road and Camberwell New Road/Camberwell Church Street.

- "At the North East of the Green is Camberwell Magistrate's Court, and at the North West is a home for the elderly. To the South West, and overlooking the Green, is a parade of shops including banks and restaurants. Camberwell has enjoyed mixed fortunes over the years - it has gone from a fashionable area with a good, large scale Victorian housing stock to an area associated with drugs and deprivation, to a trendy area once again, stoked by the booming art market and the spread outwards of London's growth in wealth."

August 3

- I am thinking that there should be a new regular feature, The Wisdom of Dory, about the sayings of the official *Deoth ond Mr Pickwick* porrot. Today, as Michael Segers informs me, Dory seems to be tapping into Zen with the wonderful statement: "Everybody here is everybody."

  Dory is shown here contemplating the bodhisattva Samantabhadra, who is always shown with an elephant, which of course reminds us of Chunee in *Deoth ond Mr Pickwick*.

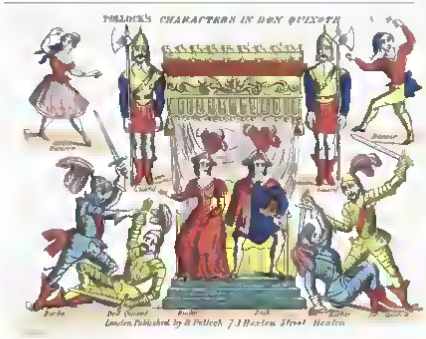
August 4

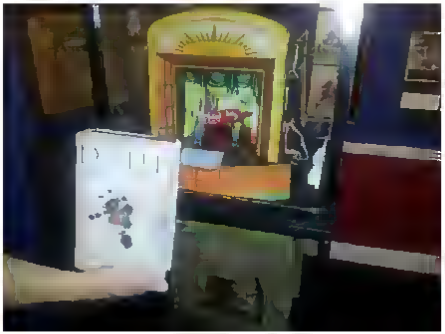
- The tour with my old friend Steve Colquhoun continues...
- In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, Mr Inbelicate's past is kept hidden until the end of the novel, except that at one point he does refer to his boyhood, and to playing with a *Life in London* toy theatre, in which he recreated the scene of the nightwatchman being attacked. At 1 Scala Street is a small but delightful institution, Pollock's Toy Museum, in which such theatres are on display - indeed, they even sell sheets of paper characters and backdrops for performances.

- Unfortunately, they did not sell *Life in London*, but there were sheets for several plays of direct relevance to *Deoth ond Mr Pickwick*. I saw *Block-Eyed Suson*, the play which Jingle mentions to Dismal Jemmy in *The Pickwick Popers* just before the story of the dying clown is told. There was also a play about the aristocratic Darnley family - whose descendants would build the mausoleum featured at the very end of *Deoth ond Mr Pickwick* - as well as *Der Freischutz* and *Don Quixote*.

Characters and Scene
DER FREISCHUTZ

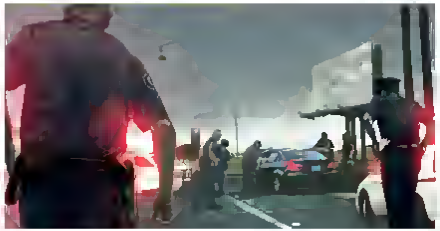
Characters & Scene
IN
DON QUIXOTE


POLLOCK'S CHARACTERS IN DON QUIXOTE
London, Published by R. Pollock 73 Hoxton Street Hoxton



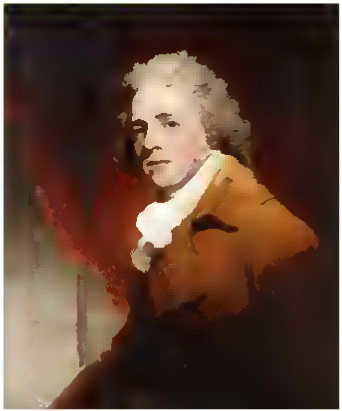
- But then, once again, we felt the rising of the thirst...
- The photographic evidence, if not the memory, indicates that we headed for The Plough ...
- More tomorrow.

August 4



- Frank Bouchier-Hayes has found this portfolio of work by Owen Freeman, the artist who illustrated *The Atlantic* review of *Death and Mr Pickwick.*
- That was one of my favourite reviews of the novel - the author truly grasped the significance of the book - and I really liked the illustration that accompanied it.
- http://www.owenfreeman.com/illustration-ii/

August 4

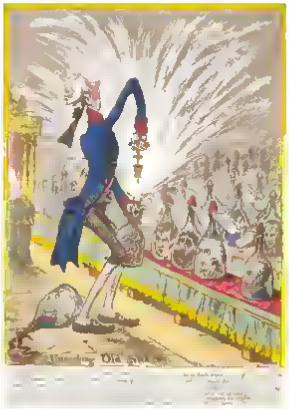


- Peter Stadlera has now posted about the playwright Sheridan. (I loved Peter's passing reference to TONY Sheridan, who sang with The Beatles as his backing band.) Sheridan is mentioned in several places in *Death and Mr Pickwick*: as the founder of an angling club, as the grandfather of Caroline Norton, and as an influence on the duelling scene in *The Pickwick Papers*.

- "Let *Death and Mr Pickwick* take you to the theatre. *The Rivals*, a comedy in five acts by Sheridan. Not by Tony Sheridan, but Richard Brinsley Sheridan, produced and published in 1775. *The Rivals* concerns the romantic difficulties of Lydia Languish, who is determined to marry for love and into poverty. Realizing this, the aristocratic Captain Jack Absolute woos her while claiming to be Ensign Beverley. But her aunt, Mrs. Malaprop, will not permit her to wed a mere ensign, and Lydia will lose half her fortune if she marries without her aunt's permission. Among the play's many plot complications is the appearance of Sir Anthony (Jack's father). In the end, Lydia abandons her sentimental notions and agrees to marry Jack. The situations and characters of the play were not entirely new, but Sheridan's rich wit and remarkable sense of theatrical effect gave them freshness. Mrs. Malaprop proved to be one of the most popular caricatures in English drama

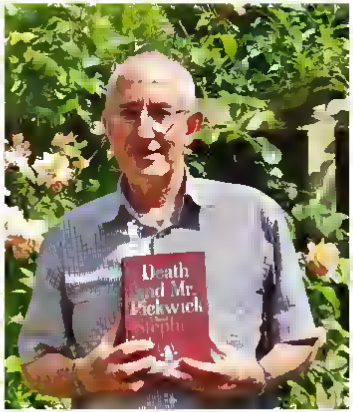
Mrs. John Drew as Mrs. Malaprop

Julia Marlowe Taber as Lydia Languish



- "Sheridan was the earliest English playwright whose works were presented in America while they were still new to the London stage. In *Uncorking Old Sherry* (1805), James Gillray caricatured Sheridan as a bottle of sherry, uncorked by Pitt and bursting out with puns, invective, and fibs.

August 4



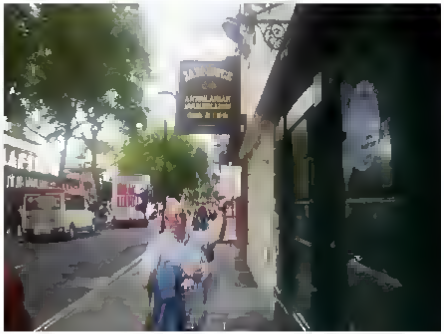
- Here is Simon Carmio, from Schagen in the Netherlands, one of the winners in the Great *Death and Mr Pickwick* Photo Competition, who has just received his prize. Well done Simon!

August 5

- Concluding my tour with Steve Colquhoun…
- At 14 Great Russell Street in London is a plaque which commemorates the Dickens story *The Bloomsbury Christening*. Although a minor piece in the Dickens canon, it is of tremendous importance to the narrative of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, because this was the story which brought Dickens and Seymour into association: Seymour illustrated an extract from *The Bloomsbury Christening* for the piratical publisher William Kidd, and thereby became the first artist ever to illustrate a work by Dickens.

- After that, Steve and I headed for the Museum Tavern, which is very close to the British Museum and of course there is a scene in *Death and Mr Pickwick* in which the young Dickens is poring over books in the Museum's Reading Room. It is a matter for some debate as to whether Dickens's thirst for knowledge was a thirst comparable to the one Steve and I experienced ..

- But certainly, photographic evidence proves that, at some point in our historical research, we sought additional personal irrigation in The Fitzrovia. (Undoubtedly there is an unrecorded occupational syndrome, 'Historian's Thirst', which should be placed alongside other disorders like Housemaid's Knee and Tennis Elbow.)



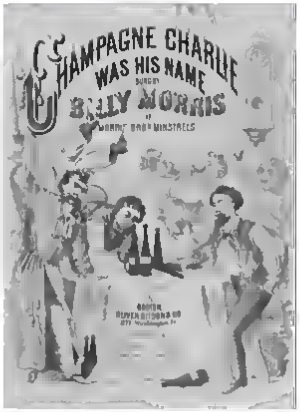
- But as we walked along, in the last stage of the tour, I suddenly saw a shop I had forgotten about - or perhaps *preferred* to forget. Jarndyce's, the antiquarian book dealer I have spoken on several previous occasions about my unsuccessful hunt for the missing *Life of Robert Seymour* manuscript - a 350 page unpublished work which vanished in the 1920s, and which I strongly suspect was deliberately suppressed by Dickensians. This manuscript was the Holy Grail of my research. The very last clue to the manuscript's fate turned up in Jarndyces's, twenty to thirty years ago. It was then that the dealer acquired some items of Seymouriana - principally, some letters written by Seymour's son - which were known to have been stored with the missing manuscript. Unfortunately, the dealer could not remember the person from whom he had acquired this material.
- You can imagine the frustration I felt when faced with this dead end. It's enough to drive a man to drink.

August 5

- Jamie Johnston has just sent me this wonderful photo of London - the original is hanging in the Summer Exhibition, showing presently at the Royal Academy. Can you find Dickens in the picture? (By all means, zoom in!)

August 5

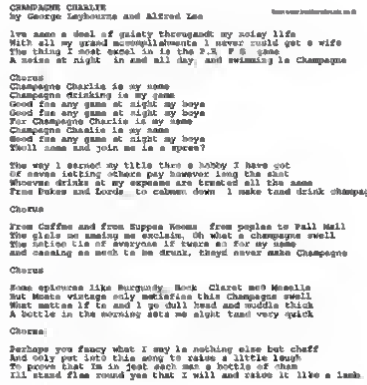
- Here's a great post by Peter Stadlera on the song that Moses Pickwick sings in *Death and Mr Pickwick*. In doing my research for the novel, I came across a reference to Moses loving this song, but it's also interesting that it was written only a few years before Moses' death, when he was an old man. So the song's huge popularity must even have brought it to the attention of senior citizens, whom one might expect to prefer the popular music of their earlier years.
- "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read that Moses Pickwick began to sing the song *Champagne Charlie*... Let's answer the question: who was this Charlie?



- "He drinks all day, gets into trouble with his friends at night, and won't settle down with one woman because he's addicted to champagne! Well, for further facts on this song, read on.

- "*Champagne Charlie* was written by a chap who used the pseudonym George Leybourne and whose real name was Joe Saunders. He was born in the Midlands in 1842 and gave up a job as a mechanic for a career in the northern music halls. His first professional appearance in London was at the Whitechapel Music Hall in 1864. In 1866 he and Albert Lee wrote *Champagne Charlie* which became an immediate hit. Dressed in the height of 'fast' fashion, in bow tie and tails, he would swig from a bottle of Moët declaring his love for the high life and women.

- "The song's style suggested a new type of man, the *Lion Comique* - a 'swell' or an attractive, fashionable, young gentleman.
- Leybourne was employed at the Canterbury Hall in 1866 for £30 a week. When William Holland became manager, he gave Leybourne a carriage drawn by four horses and told him that he must drink only champagne in public.



CHAMPAGNE CHARLIE
by George Leybourne and Alfred Lee

I've seen a deal of gaiety throughout my noisy life
With all my grand accomplishments I never could get a wife
The thing I most excel in is the P.R. F.S. game
A noise at night in and all day, and swimming in Champagne

Chorus
Champagne Charlie is my name
Champagne drinking is my game
Good for any game at night my boys
Good for any game at night my boys
For Champagne Charlie is my name
Champagne Charlie is my name
Good for any game at night my boys
Won't some and join me in a spree?

The way I earned my title then a hobby I have got
Of saving letting others pay however long the shot
Whoever drinks at my expense are treated all the same
From Dukes and Lords to cabmen down I make them drink Champagne

Chorus

From Coffee and from Suppers Rooms from poplas to Pall Mall
The girls me amazing me exclaim, Oh what a champagne swell
The notice tis of everyone if there as for my name
And causing as much to be drunk, they'd never make Champagne

Chorus

Some epicures like Burgundy, Hock, Claret me Moselle
But Moets vintage only motivates this Champagne swell
What matter if to and I go dull head and muddle thick
A bottle in the morning sets me right them very quick

Chorus

Perhaps you fancy what I say is nothing else but cheff
And only put into this song to raise a little laugh
To prove that I'm in jest each sat a bottle of them
I'll stand them round you that I will and raise it like a lamb

Chorus

- "Over the next year his salary rose to £120 per week. Women fancied him and men admired his cavalier attitude to life. A rivalry began with another performer, The Great Vance, as breweries and wine and spirit producers sponsored Leybourne and Vance to sing songs extolling the virtues of their products until they had sung their way through the wine list.

- "Later song successes included *The Doring Young Mon on the Flying* Trapeze, which celebrated Léotard's sensational debut at the Alhambra.

- "But Leybourne failed to adapt to changing times and his popularity declined. A victim of success and fast living, he died aged only 42."

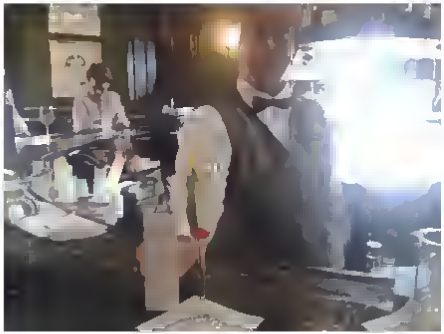
August 5

- Today, Sir Pelzi, the *officiol Deoth ond Mr Pickwick* cat, has received his prize for his entry in the Great *Deoth ond Mr Pickwick* Photo Competition and...

- ... his owner, Peter Stadlera, is celebrating Sir Pelzi's success!

August 6

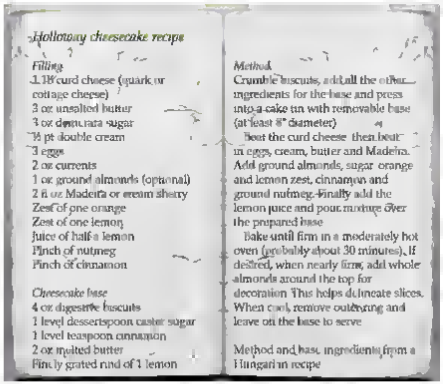
- Announcing....THE *DEATH AND MR PICKWICK* COCKTAIL!!!!
- Elaine was in Washington DC on a work trip, and just before she came home she visited the magnificent Round Robin Bar in the Willard Hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue. Dickens was a guest at the hotel, and so it seemed an appropriate place to create a *Death and Mr Pickwick* cocktail. The cocktail had to include a green component - recalling the green wrappers that Seymour designed for the original serial-parts issue of *The Pickwick Papers*. Also, it had to be suggestive of Seymour's death - perhaps there could be a blood-red element? And perhaps too it could include something colourful, suggestive of the stage-outfit of the dying clown in Seymour's last *Pickwick* drawing?



- Elaine gave the assignment to Meklit, the Round Robin's fantastic bartender, who proceeded to create the following cocktail:
- *DEATH AND MR PICKWICK* COCKTAIL RECIPE
- Splash of St-Germain
  Drop in a cherry (For the red component)
  Splash of Apple Sourz (For the green)
  Top up with Champagne
  Add another splash of Apple Sourz, to make the drink greener
  Twist of orange peel (For something clownishly colourful.) Squeeze the peel so that oil from the orange goes into the glass.
- CHEERS!
- And, although I didn't suggest champagne as a component, it is an entirely appropriate one, given that *Champagne Charlie* was a song loved by Moses Pickwick. (See Peter Stadlera's post of yesterday.)

- Elaine also spotted *Death and Mr Pickwick* on sale at a branch of Barnes and Noble. Of particular interest here is the novel two books away, to the left of *Death and Mr Pickwick*: this is *Muse*, the new novel by Jonathan Galassi, President of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, the American publisher of *Death and Mr Pickwick*.

August 6



Holloway cheesecake recipe

Filling
1 lb curd cheese (quark or cottage cheese)
3 oz unsalted butter
3 oz demerara sugar
½ pt double cream
3 eggs
2 oz currents
1 oz ground almonds (optional)
2 fl oz Madeira or cream sherry
Zest of one orange
Zest of one lemon
Juice of half a lemon
Pinch of nutmeg
Pinch of cinnamon

Cheesecake base
4 oz digestive biscuits
1 level dessertspoon caster sugar
1 level teaspoon cinnamon
2 oz melted butter
Finely grated rind of 1 lemon

Method
Crumble biscuits, add all the other ingredients for the base and press into a cake tin with removable base (at least 8" diameter)

Beat the curd cheese then beat in eggs, cream, butter and Madeira. Add ground almonds, sugar, orange and lemon zest, cinnamon and ground nutmeg. Finally add the lemon juice and pour mixture over the prepared base

Bake until firm in a moderately hot oven (probably about 30 minutes). If desired, when nearly firm, add whole almonds around the top for decoration. This helps delineate slices. When cool, remove outer ring and leave on the base to serve

Method and base, ingredients from a Hungarian recipe

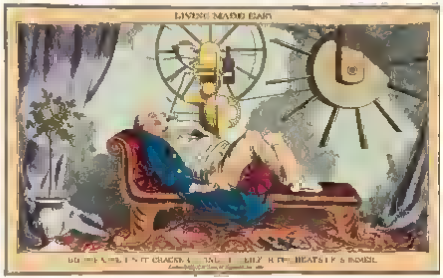
- Peter Stadlera has just found the recipe for Holloway Cheesecakes, which are mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*! I think I might make them!
- "Today Stephen announced....THE *DEATH AND MR PICKWICK* COCKTAIL!!!! Well, sometimes you also like an afternoon delight... In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about Holloway cheesecakes & sandwiches...mouth watering... I tried to find out if those delicious sounding delights are still available...

- "The Half Moon, Upper Holloway, was famous for its cheesecakes, which were hawked about London by a man on horseback who shouted 'Holloway cheesecakes!' Here we see Holloway, Islington, London, around 1800 – the Half Moon Tavern is in the background. Alas, The Half Moon ceased to exist a long time ago. Well, at least I found the original recipe for Holloway cheesecake."

August 7

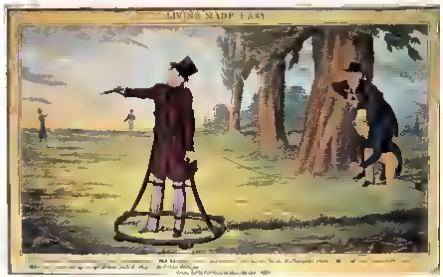
- In the Queen's collection of prints in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle, is one of the most frustrating pictures I encountered during all the years of researching *Death and Mr Pickwick*. It shows a gambler who is obviously facing ruin.

- At the bottom of the picture, in the letters spelling out 'HELL' you can see a suicidal image of a stickman hanging himself, using a gibbet made from a dice-shaker. But the picture is unsigned. Is it by Seymour?
- Certainly, it was issued in a wrapper along with several other Seymour prints, in a collection called *The Omnibus*, and is classified as a Seymour in the Royal Collection. It has a certain resemblance to Seymour's style. I agonised over whether or not to mention this print in *Death and Mr Pickwick*. It could indicate that Seymour had a gambling problem. In the end, I felt that without a signature, it would be unfair to proceed. Besides, Seymour was not in debt at the time of his death. So I omitted all mention of the print in *Death and Mr Pickwick*



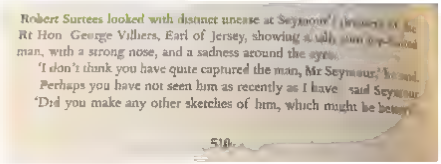
- Also shown are some other pictures in the Windsor Collection. These are definitely by Seymour, and form part of a series called *Living Made Easy*.

- Note the suggestion of violent fellatio in *The Prescription for Scolding Wives*,



- This plate shows a reluctant duellist - a theme that Seymour would return to in *The Pickwick Papers*.

August 7


Robert Surtees looked with distinct unease at Seymour's [illegible] of the Rt Hon George Villiers, Earl of Jersey, showing a [illegible] man, with a strong nose, and a sadness around the eyes.
'I don't think you have quite captured the man, Mr Seymour,' he said.
Perhaps you have not seen him as recently as I have' said Seymour.
'Did you make any other sketches of him, which might be better?'
510

- The Rochester Bridge Trust, who submitted a brilliant entry in the recent photo competition, have found various links between the text of *Death and Mr Pickwick* and themselves:
- "Another link to us!
- The Earl of Jersey sold us the land for our Bridge Chamber http://www.rbt.org.uk/chamber/victorian.htm. Checking the dates we believe his father is the earl mentioned in this passage."

August 8

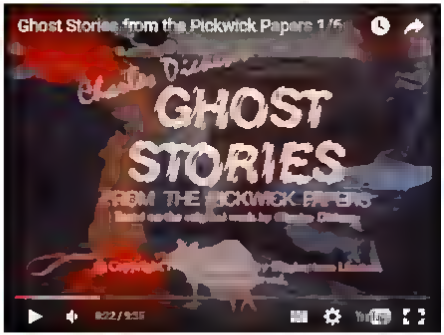
- The British Museum Prints collection has a number of works by Seymour, and quite a few are available online. Here are four.
- First up, is *Beauty Makers from Paris*. In this, Seymour speculates on the possibilities of extreme body-modification: a gentleman sits in a vat of body-softening fluid, another is stretched, a third has his nose pressed against a grindstone. A fat gentleman asks the proprietor 'Can you make me tall and genteel like my son Bobby here?' To which the Frenchman replies: 'Yes sore, and take de leetle bit from de young Gentlehomes nose!!!' I remember thinking about this print when it occurred to me that Seymour had swapped the body-shapes of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza to produce Mr Pickwick and Sam Weller: he had, as it were, put Don Quixote and Sancho in body-softening fluid, to produce a fat Don and a thin Sancho.

- In this picture, Seymour portrays three possibilities of escaping life's troubles: sleep, booze and death. When he considers escape via a dram of alcohol, note how he misspells "Dramming" as "Draming" - as readers of *Death and Mr Pickwick* know, Seymour was embarrassed by his inability to spell.

- The third, *Heaven and Earth*, is a complex design, but of particular interest here is the fat beadle shown in the foreground - very similar to the beadle in *Oliver Twist*.

- Finally, a picture mentioned in *Deoth ond Mr Pickwick*. Seymour seeks pictorial revenge upon his enemy Gilbert a Beckett, the editor of the magazine *Figoro in London* - portraying a Beckett as Thomas a Beckett, being murdered by a knight.

August 8



- Frank Bouchier-Hayes has posted this link to an animated version of some of *Pickwick*'s interpolated stories:
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rEJn71Pjc7c

August 8

- Here is Peter Stadlera's latest *Death and Mr Pickwick* post, inspired by one of the pubs mentioned in the novel.
- "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about the Mother Red Cap public house in Camden. It is located at 174 High Street, Camden Town and was renamed The World's End in 1985. Let's see the history behind this pub.

MOTHER DAMNABLE the remarkable SHREW of KENTISH
TOWN the person who gave rise to the Sign of MOTHER
RED CAP, on the Hampstead Road near London

- "Mother Red Cap is an old folklore archetype - the red hood or cap was associated with witches. But Mother Red Cap, Mother Damnable, 'The Shrew of Kentish Town' or Jinney Bingham was also a real woman who lived in a cottage where the World's End pub now stands. A mother at sixteen, her baby-daddy was one Gipsy George, who was sent to Newgate and hung at Tyburn for sheep-stealing. She had a series of lovers, some of whom, it has been suggested, died at her hand. Her parents were tried and hung as witches. She lived as a fortune-teller and healer in the house her father built on waste ground. And in the end she was left with her 'only protector'- a black cat.

- "She travelled only at night under hedges or in the lanes as 'the rabble bait[ed] her as if she were a wild beast'. The black patches on her cloak looked at a distance like flying bats. Hundreds of people claimed to have seen the devil enter her cottage - but he didn't come out.
- She was found dead with her crutch and a tea pot full of herbs, crouched by the ashes of her fire which had burned out. Her body was so stiff the undertakers had to break her limbs to fit her in the coffin.
- The pub sign depicting her stayed until the 1980s. Urban legend claims she still haunts the Underworld, the heavy metal club. In *Famous Impostors*, Bram Stoker writes of her competitor across the road, who gave her name to the Mother Black Cap pub, and claims that she was another witch.

Mother Shipton

- "Stoker goes on to explain that the black-capped woman was Mother Shipton, a 17th century Yorkshire prophetess who foretold the Great Fire of London.

- "And there is moth named the Mother Shipton Moth.
- The Mother Black Cap closed in April of this year. The pub became popular with gay men in the 1960s. It became known for its drag queen cabaret and launched acts such as Danny La Rue and Hinge & Bracket. The last song played before closing its door forever was the Soft Cell classic, Soy *Hello Wove Goodbye*."

August 9

- Is a writer motivated, from an early age, by thoughts of achieving renown? And is there something in the typical writer's background which starts that desire?
- In my own case, I can certainly remember, when I was a small child, being fascinated when my father told me about two supposedly distinguished ancestors of mine. One was called Robert Pretty (his surname rhymed with 'Betty') who was an actor, and who took the stage name of Robert Young. My father proudly told me that there were playbills bearing his name in The London Museum, which was one of the organisations later embodied in the modern Museum of London. The other was called Francis Pretty, who had invented the musical instrument the serpent. Sadly, in later years, I discovered that these ancestors were not quite as distinguished as my father believed.

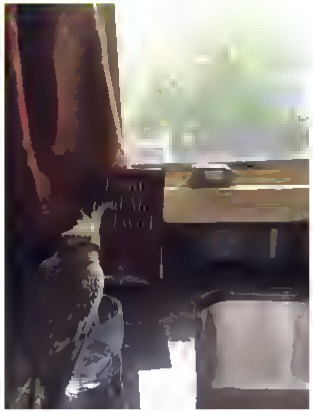
- Francis Pretty certainly did not invent the serpent, though he did make them, but he fraudulently added a plate to his instruments where he described himself as "Inventor and Maker". (The plate is shown here, which also states that his shop was located at "Waterloo Road, near the obelisk, London".) It's rather an odd coincidence that I should have an ancestor who was involved in making bogus claims about invention, and that I should end up writing about Dickens, who made bogus claims about his role in the invention of *Pickwick*. Strangely enough, when I came to read the book *A Ramble Among the Musicians of Germany*, written by Seymour's cousin Edward Holmes, I came across Holmes's description of the sound of the serpent - that it was a "nuisance" whose sound resembled "the immature efforts and bleating of a bull-calf".

Chester, Lyceum.
POSITIVELY
Miss BYFELD'S
LAST APPEARANCE.
The New Play of The HUNCHBACK
This present FRIDAY July 29th, 1852,
Hunchback,
With New Scenery, Dresses, Appointments, &c.
A PAS SEUL, BY MISS BYFELD
MISS BYFELD
"'Tis sweet when the heart is beaming."
MR. STEELE
BLACK EYED SUSAN;
Or ALL IN THE DOWNS
ALL IN THE DOWNS THE FLEET LAY MOORED.
RESCUE OF SUSAN BY WILLIAM.
FUNERAL PROCESSION ALONG THE GANGWAY
ROMEO AND JULIET
RAYMOND AND AGNES

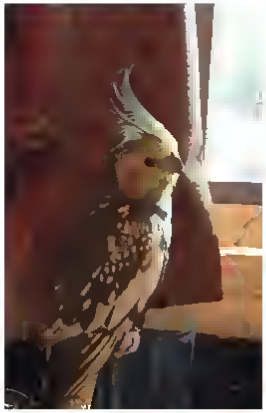
- And as for the actor? Well, I once subscribed to an online newspaper archive, and I did a search on his stage-name. I found just a single reference to a production in the 1850s in which he had appeared - a play called *The Hunchback*. He may have acted in other dramas, but I couldn't find evidence for them, and the playbill for *The Hunchback* shown here is not even for the particular production in which he acted. Nonetheless, there is another odd coincidence here - because *The Hunchback* plays a peculiar role in Dickens's life.

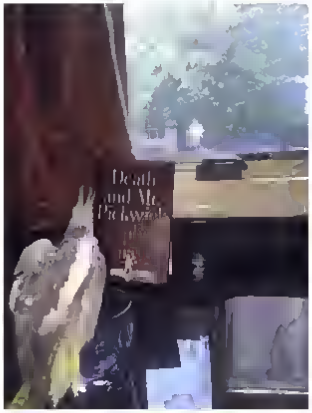
- As a young man, Dickens wanted to become an actor, and he wrote to George Bartley (shown in the portrait), the stage-manager of Covent Garden, to apply for a job. Bartley was obviously impressed by the letter, and said that he was then busy on a production of *The Hunchback*, but would write again in two weeks' time, to arrange an appointment to meet Dickens. The second letter from Bartley duly arrived with the date of an appointment - but on that day, Dickens was taken ill with a bad cold, and an inflammation of the face. Thus, he did not see Bartley, and did not become an actor. Had it not been for *The Hunchback*, Dickens may never have become a writer at all.

August 9



- I was delighted to receive these photos from Beryl Cook, showing Gypsy, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* cockatiel. Beryl writes: "Gypsy loves to sit on a glass in the kitchen and gaze out into the garden. It is one of her favorite spots. This morning she is also contemplating the great honor bestowed upon her of being *Death and Mr. Pickwick*'s official cockatiel and wonders if Robert Seymour would think her worthy of a beautiful sketch." I am sure that Seymour would have loved to have sketched Gypsy - but the only thing is that, being a political cartoonist, he would probably have slightly amended her facial features, so that she would resemble a politician. I wonder which modern-day politician Seymour might have portrayed as Gypsy?




Death
and Me
Pickwick

August 9

- Here is a great video featuring Sir Pelzi, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* cat, in honour of yesterday's World Cat Day:
- https://www.facebook.com/peter.stadlera/videos/vb.100002357979299/862271833861408/?type=2&theater
- "Sir Pelzi sends greetings to Lady and all other mousers."

August 9

- And here is more Sir Pelzi action:
- https://www.facebook.com/peter.stadlera/videos/vb.100002357979299/862430987178826/?type=2&theater
- Peter Stadlera says: “Michael Segers and Lady wanted to hear Sir Pelzi purr... Here he is checking with me if all cables are correctly connected to the PC.”

August 9

Foundling Names – Beachcombing's Bizarre History Blog

We recently offered a post on the names given to bastard children. Here is a related and far nicer post on the names given to foundlings: who seem to have

BEACHCOMBING'S BIZARRE HISTORY BLOG

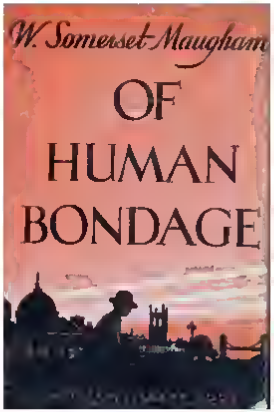
- Moses Pickwick, the foundling in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, took his name from the village of Pickwick, where he was discovered. Peter Stadlera has posted this piece about foundling names, and it includes a mention of a foundling called Moses Outcast, who was mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*.
- http://www.strangehistory.net/2015/08/08/foundling-names/

August 9

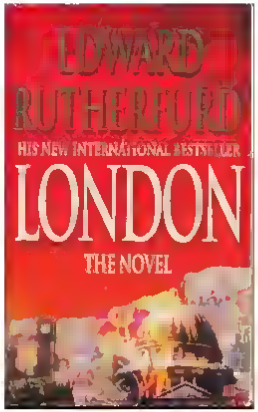
- Michael Segers has posted this picture of Lady getting out for some sunshine and fresh air on International Cat Day, although she is calling it Sir Pelzi Day.

August 10

- I have sometimes been asked about the literary works that have influenced my writing. I have never claimed to be very well-read, and I realise that I do need to read a lot more, but anyway here are four books which made a great impact on me.
- First up is *The Tree of Man* by Patrick White, the first Australian to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. This novel has no real plot, it simply tells the story of a man and a woman in the Australian bush, and the challenges they face through life. I think it was the first novel that made me see that "life" was sufficient to make a book interesting.



- Next, *Of Humon Bondoge* by Somerset Maugham. Although I wouldn't claim that *Of Humon Bondoge* has the best prose in the world, I think it is the most unputdownable book I have ever read. Its story of how a man can be enslaved by his feelings for a woman - to the extent of giving that woman money, so she can go away with another man - really brought home the follies (indeed the madness) which infatuation can produce.



- *London* by Edward Rutherfurd is my third choice. I read this novel shortly before starting *Death and Mr Pickwick*. Rutherfurd takes on board the entire history of London as his subject - somewhat similar to my taking on the entire history of a huge literary phenomenon.

- Last up is *Labyrinths* by Jorge Luis Borges. I explicitly mention one of the stories in this book in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, the tale of Pierre Menard, who recreated a section of *Don Quixote* word-for-word without ever having read the original. And when I wrote my favourite section of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, about Mr N - the character who spent fifteen years cataloguing every word in *The Pickwick Papers* - I remember thinking: "Borges would like to write about this man."

August 10

- This is a brilliant post by Peter Stadlera on a character who is mentioned during a 'forensic' section of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, when Mr Inbelicate takes apart Dickens's lies.
- "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we meet a character named Thomas Tompion. But who was this guy and what did he do? Read on:

- “Thomas Tompion, (baptized July 25, 1639, Ickwell Green, Northill, Bedfordshire - died Nov. 20, 1713, London), was an English maker of clocks, watches, and scientific instruments. He was a pioneer of improvements in timekeeping mechanisms that set new standards for the quality of their workmanship.

- "With a clock called "The Mostyn" (London around 1690, a year-going table clock) we have one of the most spectacular examples of his work. This spring-driven table clock was made by Tompion for King William III (1689-1702). It is believed to have been commissioned in 1689, the year of the coronation of William and Queen Mary. On the King's death, the clock was part of the legacy of 'the contents of the King's bedchamber' which passed to Henry Sydney, earl of Romney, who was Gentleman of the Bedchamber and Groom of the Stole. It then passed by descent to the fifth Lord Mostyn. The clock is a spectacular work by Britain's most celebrated clockmaker.

- "The case is made of ebony veneer, decorated with applied silver and gilt-brass mounts. The dome has the Royal shield of arms and Britannia with a shield bearing the combined crosses of St George and St Andrew. At the corners are the rose for England, the thistle for Scotland, and the lion and unicorn. The dial shows hours and minutes but also has a sector aperture at the top which displays the days of the week, each with a figure personifying its ruling planet. The year duration is achieved by using six-wheel gear trains. Wow, what a clock!

- "In the Great Pump Room (of Bath), Mr Pickwick in the *Pickwick Papers* finds a 'spacious saloon ornamented with Corinthian pillars, and a music-gallery, and a Tompion clock'."

August 10

Dickensblog: From the book pile: 'Death and Mr. Pickwick'

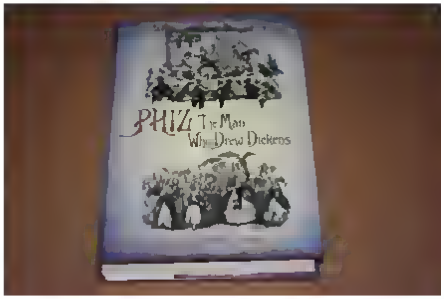
Stephen Jarvis's Death and Mr. Pickwick is not quite like any other novel I've ever read. I'll explain why in a moment. First, I need to tell you something about.

DICKENSBLOG.TYPEPAD.COM

- This review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* has just been published on a blog. The reviewer has also given the novel the lowest possible rating, 1-star, on Goodreads.
- http://dickensblog.typepad.com/dickensblog/2015/08/from-the-book-pile-death-and-mr-pickwick.html
- I have been advised that an author should never respond to a review, but I have my thoughts.

August 11

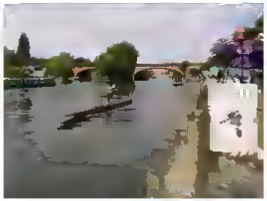
- On July 17, an unfavourable review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* appeared in the *New York Times*, which I am sure many of you recall. Valerie Browne Lester, the great-great-grandaughter of Phiz, wrote a letter to the Editor complaining about the review. Unfortunately, her letter was not published, but she sent me a copy and here it is:



- Dear Editor,
- As the great great granddaughter of Hablot Knight Browne ("Phiz"), Charles Dickens's principal illustrator, I read Stephen Jarvis's *Death and Mr Pickwick* with the greatest of interest. Having myself labored in much the same vineyard, I can appreciate the author's immense scholarship and sympathize with his principal argument that Dickens betrayed his first illustrator, Robert Seymour, by lying about the origin of *The Pickwick Papers* (After all, Dickens managed to betray Phiz, too, after a 23 year collaboration.) But this argument is only a small part of the story. Quite apart from the book's scholarship, wit, layers of intrigue, stories within stories, *Death and Mr Pickwick* is a rollicking 302 page ride, a Pickwickian page turner from start to finish that successfully accomplishes its main objective: to drive the reader back to *The Pickwick Papers*
- It was a disappointment, therefore, to read Michael Upchurch's cursory review of *Death and Mr Pickwick*. I wish that the *New York Times* had chosen a reviewer better prepared to take on a great, big book and do it justice
- Yours truly, Valerie Browne Lester

August 12

- The world first saw Mr Pickwick when he was asleep in a punt, on the wrapper of the serial parts edition of *The Pickwick Papers*. So when I heard that Maidenhead Regatta would be featuring a race between a punt and a Venetian gondola, I knew that it was a great photo-opportunity for *Death and Mr Pickwick*.



- The race was actually a recreation of an event which took place in 1926 and I was delighted to discover that Pathe News Footage of the original event survives, which you can see here:
- http://www.britishpathe.com/video/gondola-v-punt-on-sleeve-as gonola v-punt

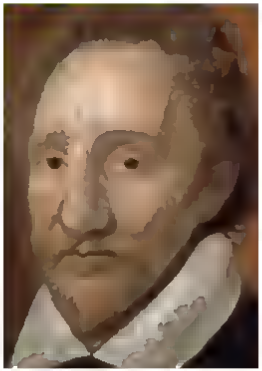
THE GRAPHIC

HOW [illegible] THE COVER FOR PICKWICK

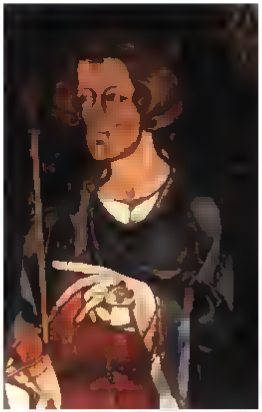
PICKWICK CLUB

- The punt on the *Pickwick* wrapper was engraved by Mason Jackson, and such was the public fascination with *The Pickwick Papers*, that even an article about that act of engraving would find an audience, and so Jackson reminisced about the event, in an article you can see here, published 63 years after *The Pickwick Papers* first appeared.

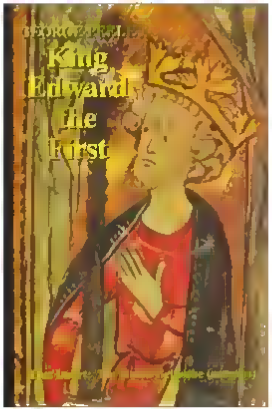
August 12



- Here is the latest of Peter Stadlera's wonderful accompaniments to *Deoth ond Mr Pickwick*.
- "In *Deoth ond Mr Pickwick* we read about *The Fomous Chronicle of King Edword the First*...here is some background information: *The Fomous Chronicle of King Edword the First* is a play by George Peele (1558-1596), published 1593, chronicling the career of Edward I of England.



- "The play concentrates on the power struggle between Edward I and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. The play's presentation of Llywelyn's life while in rebellion against Edward is based on the legend of Robin Hood. Although some sympathy is extended to the Welsh the playwright effectively endorses the aim of uniting Britain by force.



- "Heavily influenced by ballads, the play is rambling and episodic. It has been argued that the text is corrupt and that Peele did not write certain scenes, particularly a (ballad-based) deathbed confession by Queen Eleanor that of all her children, only the last, Edward of Caernarfon, is her husband's.

- "King Edward's Chair (also known as St. Edward's Chair), the throne on which English and British sovereigns have been seated at the moment of coronation, is housed within Westminster Abbey and has been used at every coronation since 1308.

- "From 1301 to 1996 (except for a short time in 1950 when it was temporarily stolen by Scottish nationalists), the chair also housed the Stone of Scone upon which the kings of Scotland are, or were, traditionally crowned. Although the Stone is now kept in Scotland, in Edinburgh Castle, at future coronations it is intended that the Stone will be returned to St. Edward's Chair for use during the coronation ceremony. The Stone of Scone would have been located beneath the seat of the chair. A replica is shown here."

August 14

- John Thomas McElheny has just sent me this wonderful illustration he has drawn, based upon the scene in *Death and Mr Pickwick* in which the first member of the Pickwick family, Moses Pickwick, is found as a baby beside the road at the village of Pickwick in Wiltshire. I am overwhelmed that he has created this drawing, not only because it is a fantastic picture in its own right, but also because it resonates with the history of *The Pickwick Papers*, and all the illustrations that work inspired. For it is almost certainly the case that *The Pickwick Papers* has inspired more illustrations than any other work in the history of English literature, with many artists producing drawings of Mr Pickwick and his associates, long after the original trio of Seymour, Buss and Browne - it is as though there is an illustrative quality in *Pickwick*'s text, which continued even after Seymour's death. So I am deeply moved to see *Death and Mr Pickwick* inspiring a picture. Thank you so much, John!

August 14

- Peter Stadlera has just posted this about a caricaturist who was certainly an influence on Seymour.
- "Henry Bunbury (1750-1811) was one of a number of 'gentlemen caricaturists' in the eighteenth century whose work, unlike that of James Gillray and Thomas Rowlandson, was rather genteel, in order not to offend notable individuals. *In Death and Mr Pickwick* we meet him with the *book An Academy of Grown Horsemen*, written under the pseudonym Geoffrey Gambado, 'Riding Master, Master of the Horse, and Grand Equerry to the Doge of Venice', which pokes fun at the antics of inept horsemen.

- "*The Acodemy of Grown Horsemen* was particularly popular with the reading public and was reissued several times during Bunbury's lifetime. You can see pictures of Bunbury in the Tate Gallery."

August 14

- Here, Peter Stadlera posts about the early movie actor, John Bunny, who became famous for playing Mr Pickwick. I wanted to include a scene in *Death and Mr Pickwick* which featured a movie or TV adaptation of *The Pickwick Papers*, and that was when I first heard about Bunny. In the end, though, I used the abandoned 1930s movie about *Pickwick* as the 'representative' adaptation, as it seemed to mark the end of the 'Pickwickian era'.
- "The John Bunny version of *The Pickwick Papers* from 1913, in the silent movie era, is very special.

- "John Bunny was a popular American performer in early comedies like *A Cure far Pakeritis* (1912) and *Hearts and Diamands* (1914)). He was born - in 1863 - to play Mr Pickwick. When Bunny died in 1915 the world mourned.
- A program for Bunny's *Pickwick Papers* in Two Acts, which played at the Victoria Picture Palace, London on June 12th, 13th, and 14th, 1913, is shown on the next page. The film consisted of three reels, each showing a separate scene from the novel: 'The Honourable Event'; 'The Westgate Seminary,' and 'The Shooting Party.'

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3. TOPICAL BUDGET
4. ALL'S FAIR. Comedy.
5. THE HUNGRY MOSQUITO.
6. PICKWICK PAPERS.
In Two Parts. From Dickens' Story of Mr. Pickwick's Adventures.

AFTERNOON TEAS SERVED DAILY FREE OF CHARGE.

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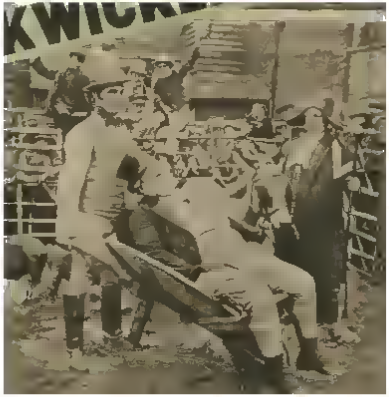


- "This poster shows Mr. Pickwick in the Pound, from 'The Shooting Party.' I found this marvelous description of Bunny's *Pickwick Papers* in the *Thames Star:*
- http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&d=THS19131018.2.19

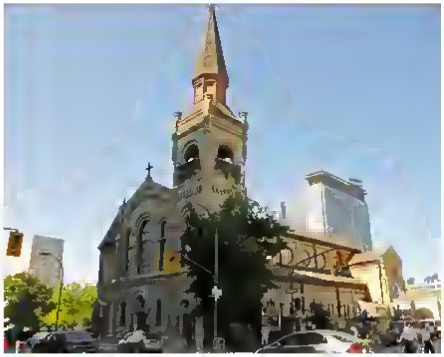
August 14

- Here we have the latest pictures of Gypsy, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* cockatiel, sent in by Beryl Cook. Gypsy is obviously fascinated by the *Don Quixote* playsheets which I featured recently in a post about toy theatre.

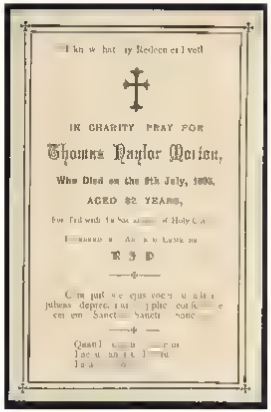
August 14

- Here is Valerie Lester, Phiz's great-great-granddaughter, at a signing session in Maine for her new book *Giombottisto Bodoni: His Life and His World*. My copy is on order, and I am eagerly awaiting delivery! Here is a review from Bookslut:
- http://www.bookslut.com/nonfiction/2015_03_021149.php

August 15



- The case of Thomas Naylor Morton - the man who saved *Pickwick* from cancellation - is both fascinating as a puzzle, and also somewhat satisfying, because there are strong indications as to the puzzle's solution.
- I first came across a reference to Morton in a 1920s issue of *The Dickensian*. It was stated that his son, a priest at St Mary's Cathedral in Winnipeg (shown here) had given a speech to a Canadian branch of the Dickens Fellowship, which unveiled information which had never been made public before: that Thomas Naylor Morton, when working as a reader for Chapman and Hall, had persuaded them to keep faith with *Pickwick*, when they were on the point of cancelling the publication, and so saved the great book. Unfortunately, there were was no record of the speech, and so beyond that very short statement in *The Dickensian*, nothing more was revealed about this crucial turning-point in *Pickwick*'s history.



I know that my Redeemer liveth

IN CHARITY PRAY FOR

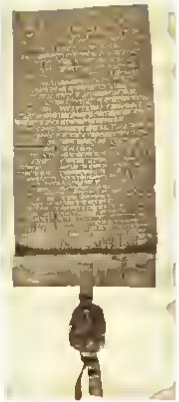
Thomas Naylor Morton,

Who Died on the 9th July, 1895,

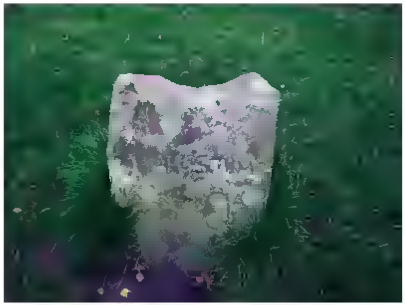
AGED 82 YEARS,

R I P

- However, I managed to trace Morton's great-grandson, and he showed me a few items such as Morton's death-card, and he also said that he had a vague recollection of hearing about Morton's involvement with Dickens, though he thought that it was in connection with *Sketches by Boz*. (It occurred to me that this latter belief could have arisen by confusing Dickens's first book, *Sketches by Boz*, with his first novel, *Pickwick*.) Anyway I was able to piece together some details of Morton's life, including his interests in antiquarian matters, and palaeography.



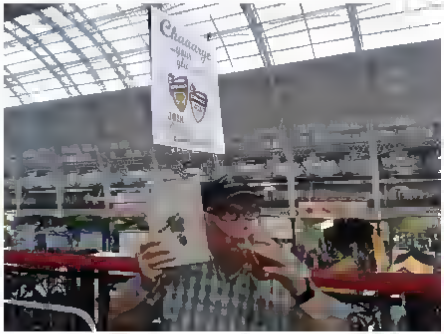
- Here for instance is an old charter he translated - but I was truly puzzled when I came across a biographical statement in *The Transactions of The Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, published as an obituary, which noted that Morton had worked for a minor publisher, Burns and Oates...and yet the statement said nothing at all about his involvement with Chapman and Hall. This was bizarre: *Pickwick* was the greatest publishing success of the nineteenth century, and surely Morton would have mentioned this with great pride to his friends and associates in the Historical Society, and would not have focused on his involvement with a minor publisher.



- However, I could not fail to notice that Morton's interests in palaeography and antiquarianism were exactly those that were ridiculed in the 'Bill Stumps' episode in *Pickwick*. Furthermore, Bill Stumps occurred in the very part of *Pickwick* that would have been under discussion when Morton persuaded Chapman and Hall to keep faith with the publication. Also, I had read about an outbreak of graffiti saying 'Bill Stumps' which had defaced ancient monuments, such as the standing stone shown here. It suddenly occurred to me: MORTON WAS EMBARRASSED ABOUT SAVING *PICKWICK*. In the antiquarian circles in which he moved, the Bill Stumps graffiti would have been cursed, along with the ridicule it heaped upon antiquaries and palaeographers. The likelihood is that Morton simply couldn't admit to his friends that he was the person who had saved *Pickwick*, and so he hushed up his involvement with Chapman and Hall.

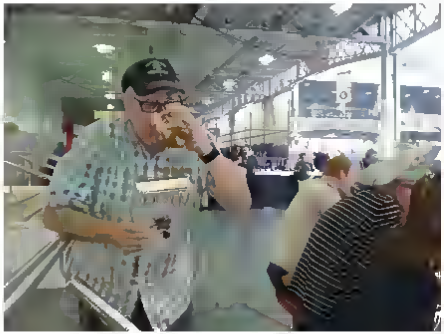
August 16

- A few days ago, I attended the Great British Beer Festival in Olympia, organised by CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. There were 900 beers, ciders and perries, and even I could not try them all, so I made my selections using the technique I had pioneered at the smaller Maidenhead Beer Festival: choosing beers whose names had some connection to *Death and Mr Pickwick* or *The Pickwick Papers*.



- So here you will find me trying the likes of “Top Tup” in honour of Mr Pickwick’s friend Mr Tupman.

- And "Game Bird" as an allusion to the rook-hunting scene where Mr Tupman was shot.



- Then there was “White Horse” for the Great White Horse Inn in Ipswich where Mr Pickwick stayed.

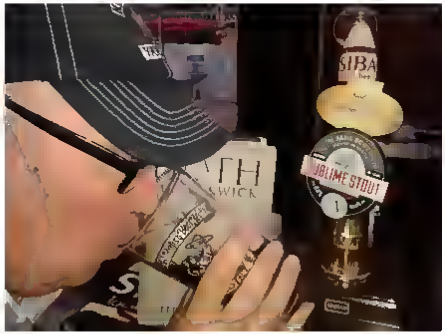
- And “Nelson” to evoke the victory at Trafalgar.

- A slightly more tenuous connection exists with "Flying Monk" beer: this recalls Elmer of Malmesbury, the monk who tried to fly by strapping wings to himself - and in researching the section in *Death and Mr Pickwick* about Prince Bladud, who attempted a similar feat, I read a work which explored the mechanics of Elmer's wings.

- Interestingly, the food at the festival offered *Death and Mr Pickwick* connections too. There was a *Tom and Jerry* salad, consisting of chorizo, cheese and roasted peppers, which I scoffed in a roll, thereby bringing to mind the characters who appear in Pierce Egan's *Life in London*.

- Also a fantastic Jack Horner sausage roll, honouring the "Immortal Horner" (as he is called in *The Pickwick Papers*) the patron saint of fat boys.

- For dessert, a champagne-flavoured chocolate recalled Moses Pickwick's love of the song *Champagne Charlie*.



- I washed this down with "Sublime Stout" - for surely no one is more sublimely stout than Mr Pickwick.

- After the festival, Elaine and I dined at the Yas restaurant nearby, which specialises in Persian cuisine, and I had a fantastic dish of lamb and kidney beans.

- You will note though the sign for the Shehrezade Club downstairs - keeping up a connection with *Death and Mr Pickwick*, for the tales told in *The Arabian Nights* exerted a profound influence on Dickens.

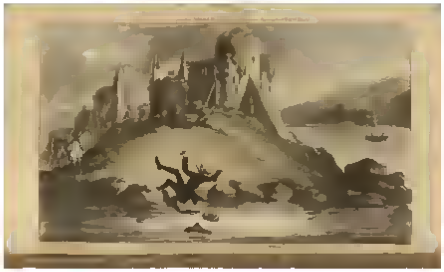
- Afterwards, we went to our hotel, and in the bar was yet another connection with my novel, in the form of a picture of Freddie Mercury - because the Queen song *The Show Must Go On* is mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*.

- Finally, we went to our room, where I put an item of breweriana I had purchased at the festival to good use - a china tankard showing our very good friend Mr Pickwick, the man whose great deeds are such an inspiration to us all.

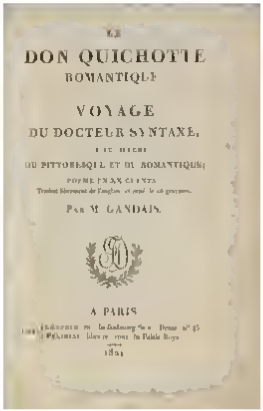
DEATH
AND
MR PICKWICK

August 16

- Here is the great Peter Stadlera on the *Pickwick*-forerunner *Dr Syntax*.
- "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we come across *The Schaalmaster's Taur*, a work by Thomas Rowlandson and William Combe. This series of Rowlandson's drawings, accompanied by the verses of William Combe, was published in the *Paetical Magazine* (1809-11) launched by the art publisher Rudolph Ackermann, who was Rowlandson's chief employer. (The volumes of *The Paetical Magazine* are today worth $2.500!) It was reworked and renewed in *The Taur af Dactar Syntax in Search af the Picturesque* (1812). Sequels were: *The Secand Taur af Dr. Syntax in Search af Cansalatian* (1820) and *The Third Taur af Dr. Syntax in Search of a Wife* (1821).



- "A typical episade...
- Learning that a riverside castle had just been hit by lightning and reduced ta ruins, Syntax decides ta sketch this ready-made Gathic scene, anly ta stumble inta the river:
- *A heap af stane the Dactar faund,*
  Which laasely lay upan the graund,
  Ta farm a seat, where he might trace
  The antique beauty af the place:
  But, while his eyes abserv'd the line
  That was ta limit the design,
  The stanes gave way, and sad ta tell,
  Dawn fram the bank he headlang fell.



- "The clueless seeker of the picturesque, Doctor Syntax, has wandered onto unstable ground in search of a picturesque angle of the ruin; tumbling backwards off a rock, Syntax goes sprawling into the water below. This farcical caricature illustrates the public perspective of picturesque tourists as foolishly obsessed with finding picturesque views—even to the point of pain and humiliation.

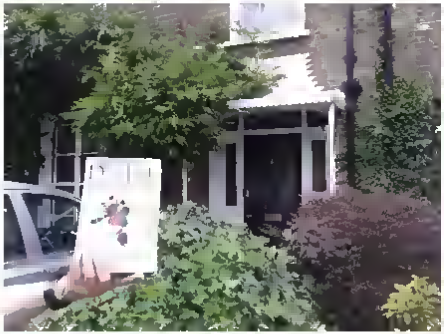
- "And here is another Rowlandson picture which offers us a look into the *Chamber of Genius*: the artist is wearing a nightshirt and painting a picture at his home/studio while his wife, children, and a cat are neglected."

August 17

- The morning after the Great British Beer Festival, Elaine and I had breakfast in the William Morris pub in Hammersmith. On the walls of the pub are pictures of a man who played a small part in the history of *The Pickwick Papers*...

- ...the writer Leigh Hunt. According to R W Buss, Hunt was given the chance of being Seymour's partner on the *Pickwick* project, but he declined the offer. You will see here a picture of Hunt when he was 66.

- And here is Hunt at 50.



- Hunt lived in Hammersmith in the last years of his life, at 16 Rowan Road (then 7 Cornwall Road) and you can see the house here.
- When I was writing *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I contacted Professor Nick Roe, an expert on Leigh Hunt, and asked his opinion on the suitability of Hunt as the writer of *Pickwick*. He told me that Hunt had written about rural life, Christmas, coaches and coachmen and was a keen horseman. "Rural pastimes and picturesque rural life were very much his thing," said Professor Roe. "Hunt seems an obvious author to approach for the text of *Pickwick*."

- It is interesting to note that traditional accounts of the origin of *Pickwick* often talk about Chapman and Hall wanting a 'hack writer' to produce the text. The motivation for this claim seems to be that only Dickens, riding the white stallion of his genius, saved the project from being inconsequential garbage. But if one looks at the quality of two of the people offered the job, Leigh Hunt and Charles Whitehead, it would be unfair to simply put them down as 'hacks'. Both were writers of some talent. The label of 'hack' might be applied more reasonably to another person known to have been offered the *Pickwick* job, namely William Clarke, but even in Clarke's case it has to be remembered he had just produced a hugely successful book, *Three Courses and a Dessert*, with illustrations by Cruikshank, and so was not just any old writer.

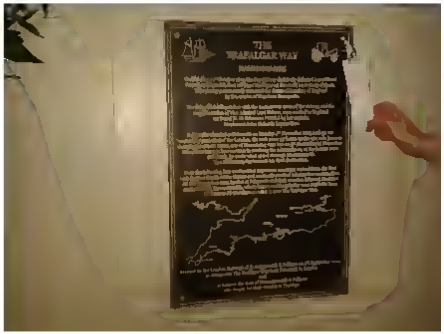
August 18

- Many of the pictures which appear in *Sketches by Seymour* were obviously drawn in locations that Seymour visited, because they contain detailed architecture in the backgrounds. In most cases, these locations cannot be identified, but a drawing which can be placed with certainty is the one here, showing Hammersmith Bridge.

- The current bridge, built in 1887, is a replacement of the one of Seymour's time, though the pier foundations are the same.

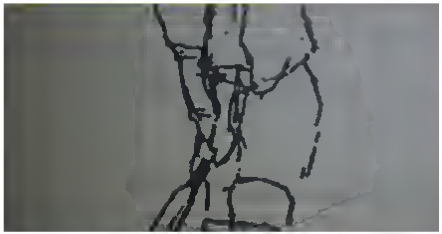
- Hammersmith was also where Queen Caroline died in 1821. her death is mentioned briefly in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, because it helped to form a new national mood in which the 'anything-goes' cartoons of the Gillray-Rowlandson era were swept away, leaving the way clear for the milder humour of Seymour and *The Pickwick Papers*. Caroline died in Brandenburgh House, which no longer survives, but it was located roughly in the area of Distillery Wharf.

- A modern set of apartments, with faux old appearance (including old-style lettering above the entrance) has been built nearby, calling itself Brandenburgh House.



- As usual, these historical investigations built up a powerful thirst, and so Elaine and I adjourned to The Salutation, built on the site of an old coaching inn The pub has a plaque referring to another background element of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, namely The Battle of Trafalgar, and specifically to 'The Trafalgar Way', the route passing through Hammersmith which was used for dispatches

August 18



All Muggleton, Dingley Dellers and much more—Charles Dickens and his connections to cricket

The first tour of English cricketers to Australia in 1861-62 took place as a replacement show because Charles Dickens had refused to travel that far to

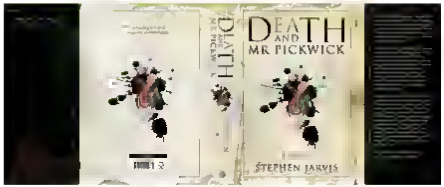
WWW.CRICKETCOUNTRY.COM

- Michael Segers has just posted this on Dickens and cricket:
- http://www.cricketcountry.com/articles/all-muggleton-dingley-dellers-and-much-more-charles-dickens-and-his-connections-to-cricket-318912
- Good find, Michael.

August 18

- Lori Ann has just posted these images of two books which were important influences on *The Pickwick Papers*.

August 18



- You will no doubt recall the review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* which appeared on the Dickensblog a few days ago. I have been advised that an author should never comment on a review, but I have just posted a statement on the blog, which I think is acceptable. (The 'Herb Moskovitz' I refer to had just commented on the review, and I began by picking up on a couple of points he made. The 'Gina' I refer to is the reviewer.) Anyway here is my statement:
- Hello - Stephen Jarvis here. There are many, many, many things I could say here, but the advice I have been given is that an author should never respond to reviews. But just looking at Herb Moskovitz's comment now I would say three things:

- 1) Sam Weller was at least partly Seymour's creation. 2) There was no stipulation that Seymour had to continue the illustrations to receive more money - Chapman and Hall's increased remuneration to Dickens was based upon the success of the publication, and no one could doubt *Pickwick*'s success. 3) I think anyone could see that *Death and Mr Pickwick* is a very rich text, which can be the starting point for many further investigations and discussions, including the extent to which the things I have written were invented or not. In the case of the 'grog' meeting between Dickens and Seymour, for instance, the specifics of the meeting are of course unknown, and so were invented by me. HOWEVER, one fact is known:

- Seymour was reduced to an emotional wreck after this meeting, and burnt all his papers about *Pickwick*. So, one invents SUBJECT TO THE CONSTRAINT that the meeting must reduce him to this state. There are infinitely many ways in which the specifics of the meeting could have been constructed, subject to that constraint - the way I chose was to make it reflect the underlying 'battle' between words and pictures.

- As I have said, I am bound by the advice that a writer should not respond to reviews. But I hope that people will communicate with me privately (and the offer extends to Gina) to discuss these matters. I hope too that people will take a look at the facebook page where I post every day about the novel.

- I would stress that *Death and Mr Pickwick* should be seen as the starting point for a great many debates and further investigations ... and indeed the stimulus for many visits to locations featured in the novel. (Including pubs!) Play this right, and *Death and Mr Pickwick* could completely transform public response to this part of Dickens's career, and re-awaken the 'sleeping giant' that is *Pickwick*. *Death and Mr Pickwick* offers a huge opportunity for Dickensians. But I also fear that Dickensians are going to miss that opportunity – an opportunity which is staring them in the face.

- Let me finish by saying that the other day someone sent me an illustration which was inspired by a scene in *Death and Mr Pickwick*. I was deeply touched by that. It felt like a historic moment, showing the potential of the novel. Prior to this, there had been a photo competition on the facebook page, and one entry was a remarkable picture which captured the tragedy of the Seymour family spread over three generations in a single image. These are just a couple of examples of what *Death and Mr Pickwick* can do. 'It is not an ordinary' book.

August 18

- Lori Ann has just posted this pic. Here is what she says: 'Not a very good picture as it's behind glass, but this is my 1815 Dr Syntax print. The caption reads "Dr Syntax Mistakes a Gentleman's House for His Inn.' Yes, glass is always a problem - as I know from my own attempts to capture images from the walls of pubs! But many thanks for posting this Lori Ann.

August 19

- In Chiswick, there is a bar called The Italian Job, but it used to be called Pickwick's Wine Bar.

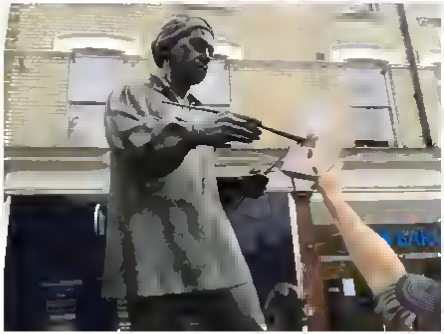
- I was delighted to see that there is a relic of the bar's Pickwickian past, in the form of clock, which I sat beneath as I quaffed a coriander-flavoured Italian beer.

- Also in Chiswick is a pub which is one of the very few in England to have two official names: The Mawson Arms and...

- ...The Fox and Hounds. It seems that this binomenclature (to use a very ugly word) arose because a previous landlord was confused about the licensing laws, and split his business into an alehouse and a separate wine and spirits bar. But the pub was also the home of the poet Alexander Pope, who gets a brief mention in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, via a door-to-door book peddler of Dickens's childhood who had a passion for reciting lines of verse, including those by Pope.

- But Chiswick's most famous son is Hogarth, who merits several mentions in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, not least in the description of Seymour as "the Hogarth of our age."

- In Hogarth's house, one can see his various 'serial works' displayed, such *Morrioge ò lo Mode* and *A Roke's Progress*. These sets of linked pictures can certainly be seen as the forerunners of serial illustrated narratives of the nineteenth century, like *The Pickwick Popers*.

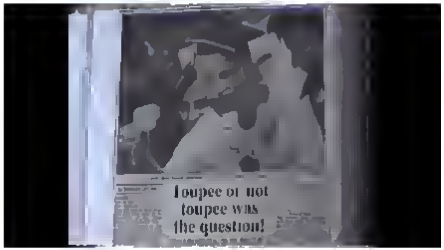


August 20

- On several occasions, I have spoken about how I used to write about unusual leisure activities, and that this was a great preparation for writing *Death and Mr Pickwick*. The most enjoyable time I EVER had, out of the several hundred activities I tried, was the evening I spent, some twenty years ago, with the members of the Bruce Forsyth Social Club.

- People outside the UK may not have heard of Farsyth - but he had a very long career as a game show host, working on such programmes as *Play Your Cards Right* and *The Generation Game*. More recently, he has hosted the British version of *Dancing with the Stars*, called *Strictly Come Dancing*. However, Bruce Farsyth is renowned for two things in particular. Firstly, for his numerous catchphrases, such as "Nice to see you, to see you - nice!" "Good game, good game!" and "Didn't he do well?" And secondly, because...well, he wears a wig.

- The Bruce Forsyth Social Club used to go on pub crawls in Plymouth, playing they own versions of the gameshows at the hostelries they visited, and using Bruce Forsyth's catchphrases. And, in honour of Forsyth's covered follicles, the members wore pieces of carpet on their heads.



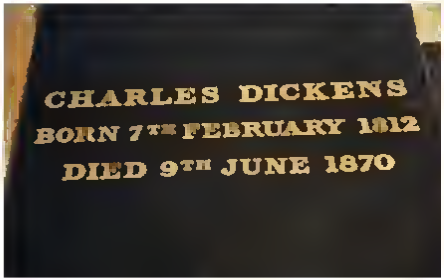
- I was initiated into the club, and of course I too wore the sacred rug, which was held in place by double-sided double-strength carpet tape. My memory of that meeting is that, as we got drunker and drunker, imitating Bruce Forsyth became funnier and funnier.

- Yesterday, twenty years on, I re-established contact with the club's chief Bruce, Mike Colwill He gave me a link to a five minute compilation video of the club's old activities I appear in the video very briefly myself - alas carpetless - when I was publicising my first book, *The Bizarre Leisure Book*, on Richard and Judy's TV show
- Mike tells me that he and the other Bruces hold an annual Christmas reunion, called The Twelve Pubs of Christmas, although they don't wear carpet any longer I am hoping to persuade them to put on those rugs one more time... and if they do, I would love to attend the reunion myself! I DEFINITELY want photos for this facebook page!
- Anyway, here I am, a much younger man, in a frame from the video - and if you want to see the whole thing this is the link
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVV76xBjGyw&feature=share

August 21

- A recent review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* accused me, via the character of Mr Inbelicate, of disbelieving 'every single word that Dickens ever said about anything' - that I didn't believe the way that Dickens reacted to the sale of his first story the way he said he did, that I didn't believe that Dickens s brother got his nickname in the way Dickens said he did, etc.
- But there are very good reasons for not believing some of Dickens's statements: the man was a demonstrable liar, who would twist the facts of his past if it suited him. Let me say more.
- The person shown here is the late Dr David Parker, who was the Curator of the Dickens Museum, and author of *Christmas and Charles Dickens*, and other Dickensian books and articles.

- As Parker told me when I met him for the first time in the Dickens Museum, his enthusiasm for Dickens was kindled as a teenager, when he saw the 1950s movie of *The Pickwick Papers*, starring James Hayter, which at the time he thought was the funniest thing he had ever seen. After he retired, Parker embarked upon an ambitious project: the line-by-line guide to *The Pickwick Papers*. His intention was to produce the complete guide to *Pickwick* - explaining all the contemporary references in the book, which nowadays may be obscure to modern readers, and which may be inadequately explained in the footnotes to modern editions. Alas, Parker abandoned the project - it seems that there was a dispute with his publisher, and also he admitted to me that he was "getting lazy", and was drinking more than usual, and although he did consider that he might be able to re-use some of the material he had produced on his planned guide in essays, his death in 2013 meant that he didn't get very far in publishing his Pickwickian endeavours



- However, as part of this work, he examined the various prefaces to *Pickwick* which Dickens had written, and I heard Parker give a speech on "Pickwick's Prefaces", in which he confessed that he was surprised to discover, when he examined the prefaces, that they contained numerous little lies and instances of "spin". Parker didn't discover the big lie, of course – that Dickens had invented a false origin for *The Pickwick Papers* – but his discoveries certainly indicated that Dickens wasn't to be trusted when talking about his own past

- Take for instance the age at which Dickens claims he received the offer to write *Pickwick*. In his 1867 preface, Dickens claims that he was 22 or 23. He was actually 24. In an earlier preface, he had said he was 23 – that may have been a genuine error, as he was only just 24 – but in the later preface, which revised the earlier one, he takes the sentence about his age, and deliberately inserts the possibility that he was 22. As Parker said, "I can't believe he couldn't do the arithmetic." The effect of lowering the age, of course, is to make himself appear even more of a genius – here was a man at the age of just TWENTY TWO who had produced that astonishing work, *Pickwick*.

- But this little deception was nothing compared to another couple of claims. Dickens said that he was "born and partly bred in the country". This is a real whopper. Because Dickens was born in the naval city of Portsmouth, and grew up in the Rochester-Chatham area, the location of probably the world's largest military complex. He also says that, despite that background in the 'countryside', "I was no great sportsman, except in regard of all kinds of locomotion." As Parker pointed out: the only form of locomotion the Dickens family was regularly acquainted with was walking. The effect of these two statements though, is to suggest that Dickens had the family background of a country gentleman - in other words, he was prepared to raise his own status, and was perfectly willing to lie about his past to do so.
- I'll say more about this tomorrow.

August 22

- Continuing yesterday's discussion about Dickens's rewriting of his own past...
- I have spoken on various occasions about how I had to cut out all sorts of material from *Death and Mr Pickwick* - the book is very long as it is, but it could have been even longer. One episode which went, and which perhaps I should have kept, concerns the peculiar case of Phiz's illustration for the character of Pott. You will see here the illustration as it originally appeared, during *Pickwick*'s serial run - Pott is the tall figure in the centre.

- As sales rocketed, Phiz had to re-etch all the plates, because they were being worn down by the action of the printing press, and so he duly re-etched the one with Pott. But notice how Pott looks completely different in the re-etched version, with an added beard.

- Later in the serial run, the character of Pott returned, but Phiz's illustration for this scene shows Pott's head covered with a sack, so the features are invisible - and hence this illustration is compatible with either version of Pott's face. Why should this peculiar remaking of Pott have occurred?

- It was pointed out many years ago by Professor Robert Patten that the first version of Pott is actually a representation of Lord Brougham, the former Lord Chancellor. Brougham was portrayed on many occasions by Robert Seymour. Here, for instance, Seymour portrays Brougham as a fairy
- So the portrayal of Pott as Brougham strongly suggests the involvement of Seymour in this scene, even if the picture was executed by Phiz after Seymour's suicide. Indeed, that there would be election scenes (which of course feature Pott) was mentioned in the pre-publication *Pickwick* prospectus, when Seymour was in charge of the project. But one can imagine that, as *Pickwick* took off, people started to talk about Seymour being the originator of *Pickwick*. With the picture of Pott as Brougham in front of everyone there would be evidence to support the talk. So what does Dickens do? He orders Phiz to redraw the picture, thereby removing any suggestion of Seymour's involvement. The sequence of pictures therefore provides a pictorial representation of Dickens's tendencies to rewrite his own past

- And here is another example of Seymour portraying Brougham – this time Brougham is dressed in his Lord Chancellor's garb, but overseeing the use of a stomach pump. As the most prolific political cartoonist of his era, who had depicted Brougham many, many times, in many guises, an image of Brougham in *Pickwick* was bound to suggest Seymour's hand in the planning of the scene.
- So when I was accused of not believing Dickens – yes, I freely admit it, and with good reason. Indeed, the two specific examples that were cited of my disbelief – that I didn't believe the way that Dickens said he reacted to the sale of his first story and that I didn't believe that Dickens's brother got his nickname in the way Dickens said he did – refer to things in the prefaces to *Pickwick*, which Dr David Parker found to contain numerous lies and examples of spin, as I mentioned yesterday.
- So here is a project for an academic – go through the whole of Dickens's non-fictional output, and check it for inconsistencies and improbabilities. I think a sizeable book, *Dickens the Liar*, could be the result.

August 23

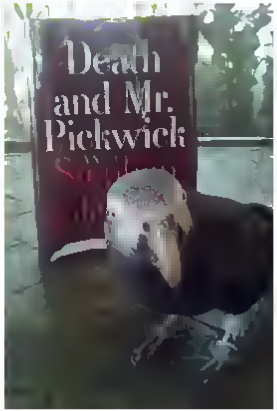
- In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, Bladud, the legendary king of Britain, is fascinated by the 'dark arts' and attempts to fly. Just before he hurls himself from a tower, with wings strapped to his back, he says: "I have the will to soar...I believe I shall soar...I imagine I am soaring." Earlier in the story, Bladud had used the same words - will, believe, imagine - when he attempted to project spiritual fingers from his physical hand, to grasp an object on a table. My choice of words - will, believe, imagine - comes from an incident in my past.

- When I was at university, I became friends with Marcus Lim, who is now the lead singer in the Bristol-based band Blackfire. (Marcus is a remarkable performer, and do check out the band's website www.blackfire.co.uk/). There is a goth element to Blackfire's music, and at university Marcus was very interested in witchcraft.

- He told me that there was a witchcraft 'formula' to make things happen by mental power alone : you should *will* something to happen, *believe* it can happen, and *imagine* it happening. He said that if I followed that triple path, anything was possible. I dismissed this as garbage, but he said I should give it a go. He suggested I should try it out on some little thing first - perhaps trying to extinguish a candle, or making a balanced coin fall over - before attempting anything more substantial.
- That night, I lay in bed, unable to sleep, and so I thought I would try out Marcus's witchcraft...

- There was a poster of the pop singer Bryan Ferry on the wall, and I resolved that I would make it fall down. So, for about half an hour, I had an iron-hard will that the poster would fall, I believed with all my heart that it would come down, I imagined as vividly as possible that it would tumble. But nothing happened. So, I said to myself: "This is nonsense." I turned over onto my side, to get some sleep.
- The next moment the poster fell down.

August 23

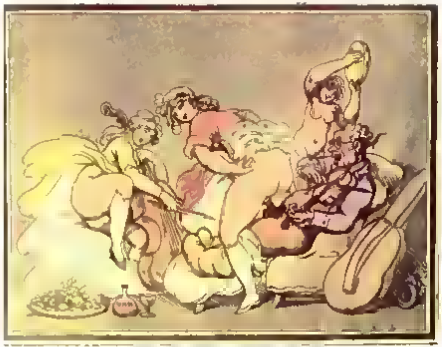


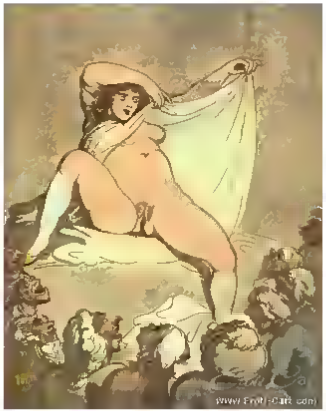
- Michael Segers: “Dory, the official parrot of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, finally encountered a dead-tree edition of the book, which he had known and loved only as an ebook.”
- Peter Stadlera: “What a wise bird Dory is presenting his favourite novel. He reminds me of a prof back in university. Sir Pelzi also says that Dory has a very learned appearance. He thinks Dory attended a well-known university. Sir Pelzi is a Cambridge man...”

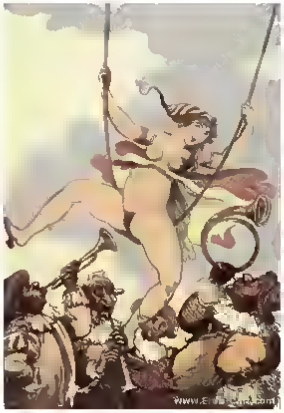
August 24

- Thomas Rowlandson, as well as being a great caricaturist, was also a pornographer. This is alluded to in *Death and Mr Pickwick* when a drinker in The Boot public house in Stockbridge says that hiring an album of pictures for the evening used to be the best way of sitting next to a shy girl, and another drinker remarks, Some of Rowlandson's you'd save for girls who WEREN'T so shy. There is another hint of Rowlandson being the Ben Dover of his times when Ackermann Jr says to Combe, after he has brought the drawings for *Dr Syntax*, that Combe wouldn't get to see all of Rowlandson's pictures, because the senior Ackermann had removed some, including one in which Dr Syntax was ogling a woman's breasts. In case some people are offended by seeing Rowlandson's porn, I have posted four pictures at the start from another Rowlandson series mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, *The English Dance of Death*, and then if you want to see an album of Rowlandson porn, that follows.

- Rowlandson's pornography now follows...



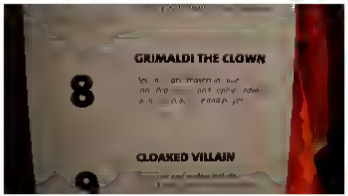


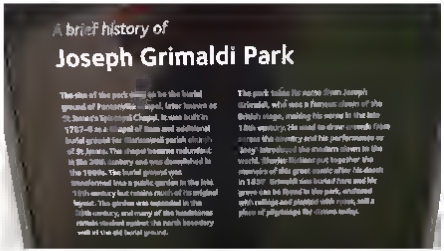


August 25

- The amazing Peter Stadlera has been on a Pickwickian tour over the last week, and here is his first post about the tour - it is truly wonderful that he has dressed up as Joseph Grimaldi. It means that we are now entering a new era of *Death and Mr Pickwick* fandom. If the book really takes off, then - who knows? I am imagining a costume parade at a convention…Anyway, this is fantastic, Peter…And everyone: do spread the word about *Death and Mr Pickwick*, and that convention will happen!
- This is Peter with the stagelights off…and now…

- *Ta dah!*
- "Today I will start a series of adventures I had during my 'Pickwickian Tour' inspired by ***Death and Mr Pickwick*** throughout last week. Let's start with me posing in the costume of Joseph Grimaldi in the V&A Museum in London. Originally I wanted to see Seymour's sketches but you have to make an appointment for that...





- “After the incredible V&A we went to Grimaldi's grave and took some pictures of the location. The place is part of the ‘Grimaldi Park’ in Islington and seems to be a bit deserted.

- "I was the only visitor at his grave. At least someone put a coloured card on the masks guarding his grave.

- "On the wall I met a colourful graffiti clown and two members of Kiss."

August 25

- As part of his Pickwickian tour inspired by *Death and Mr Pickwick* Peter Stadlera met up with me in Dulwich, where Mr Pickwick retired. A local legend developed that Mr Pickwick retired to the cottage at 31 College Road - although there is no real evidence to support that in *The Pickwick Papers* - but such was the power of *Pickwick* in people's lives, that once the legend took hold, it never left. Indeed, the cottage still survives - though when Peter and I turned up, a team of builders was in evidence, spoiling the view somewhat - but we took this picture at the gate.

- Before we went to Pickwick Cottage, Peter and I met for lunch at the Rosendale pub, a former coaching inn, and though this was the opportunity for a session of Pickwickian eating and drinking, (which Peter recorded for posterity), on this occasion sustenance was a secondary concern...

- Because, amazingly, we discovered that the pub had old posters on the wall for shows at the Whitechapel Pavilion Theatre - the very establishment where Grimaldi's son gave a drunken performance, and was pulled off stage, as featured in *Death and Mr Pickwick*!

- As Peter had dressed as Grimaldi the day before (see my previous post), meeting at this pub was obviously destiny at work.
- I shall continue the account of my meeting with Peter tomorrow.

ROYAL PAVILION THEATRE
FIRE
WORKS

August 26

- Continuing the account of my travels with Peter Stadlera...
- The primary Pickwickian site in Dulwich is the Picture Gallery, which is mentioned in both *The Pickwick Papers* and *Death and Mr Pickwick*.

- I first visited the Gallery some years ago, when I was writing the novel, and it struck me as an extraordinary place – because it is in part a mausoleum, with the tombs of the founders on public display, alongside the paintings. The gallery's mingling of death and art makes it a perfect symbol of *Death and Mr Pickwick*

- Although the Gallery is mentioned at the very end of *The Pickwick Papers*, in a part published well over a year after Seymour's death, I have often wondered whether Seymour intended that the Gallery would be the termination point of Mr Pickwick's travels – if *The Pickwick Papers* takes its name from the village of Pickwick, the coach stop for the art gallery at Corsham Court, then how appropriate for Mr Pickwick to retire on the doorstep of another art gallery
- I will continue my account tomorrow

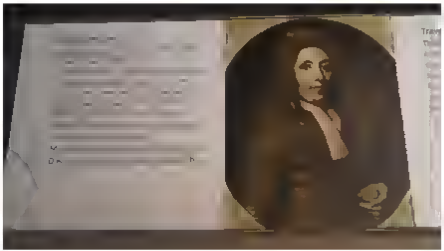
August 26

- My day out with Peter Stadlera (see my previous post) was just part of his overall Pickwickian tour. I love the halo!
- "Being on a Pickwickian Tour gets you very thirsty and hungry. I think my wife exaggerated a bit by taking this saint-like picture of me. St Peter on tour doing missionary work for *Death and Mr Pickwick*. Well, the proper tour song would be *Sympathy For The Devil* by the Rolling Stones."

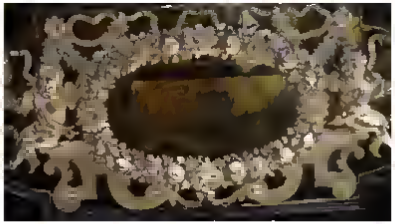
August 26

- The clocks of Thomas Tompion are mentioned in both *Death and Mr Pickwick* and *The Pickwick Papers* - and Peter Stadlera has already posted about an extraordinary Tompion clock which runs for a year on a single winding. The clock is now in the British Museum, and Peter saw it on his Pickwickian tour. There is a yearly 'winding party' at the Museum.

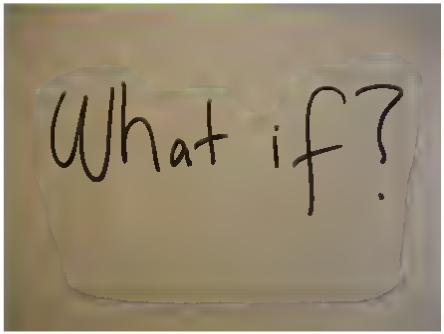
- Peter Stadlera: "On *my Death and Mr Pickwick* Tour I also admired the Tompion Clock in the British Museum. It was acquired by the BM in 1982 and there's a winding up party every year. Though I am not on the guest list for the next winding up party (the curator told me it's already finalized) I took some fascinating pictures of this clock (yes, it's really running). On my further travels I saw another Tompion clock (in Bath, in the Pump Room) and even a Lichfield clock (also in Bath, while in the Victorian Museum). But more of those clocks later on. Here are my impressions of the superb Tompion Clock, to be found in Room 39 of the BM, before ironically the light went out in the showcase of the clock.



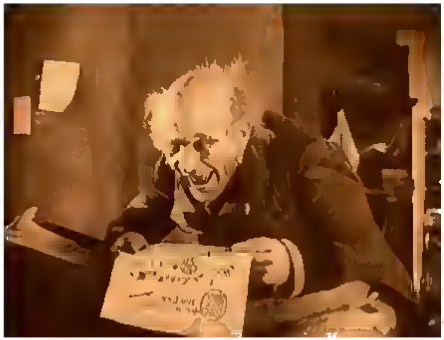
- Michael Segers: "Fascinating... these references to a clock winding party make me think of *Tristram Shandy*. Now, *that* would be an invitation to get."



August 26



- Frank Bouchier-Hayes has just written this wonderful piece, an 'alternative history' for me, Stephen Jarvis, if I hadn't completed *Death and Mr Pickwick*.



- "It was just as well that you managed to finish and publish the novel. Otherwise you might have ended up going mad and appearing as a character in another novel detailing the sad, strange and wonderful history of *Pickwick*. Behold the sad tale of Mr Jarvis, a man who spent his whole life researching an unfinished novel only to find it impossible to get a publisher owing to the dastardly machinations of the Dickensian Brotherhood sabotaging all his efforts in this regard. The unhappy experience drove him quite mad and now he is to be found frequenting old pubs associated with *Pickwick* unburdening himself of his research to anyone who might care to listen in a voice which switches between elation and melancholy. The occasional series of angry outbursts as he recalls Dickensian Brotherhood adversaries or particular moments of adversity on his uncompleted journey, which almost reached the promised land of literary fame and fortune, is delivered with such passion as to startle all present but is met with the firm yet understanding barman's gentle tones of admonishment 'Now now Mr Jarvis, you'd best be moving on sir.' 'Ah yes,' said the sorely afflicted writer, 'poor Jo that's me who's always being pushed along with no place to rest'. As the mad scribbler slowly shuffled his way out of the pub regarded with a mixture of amusement and scorn by the various onlookers, the barman slowly shook his head in a mournful manner before resuming his task of pouring another pint for a customer." Brilliant. Frank!

August 27

- My *Death and Mr Pickwick* tour with Peter Stadlera continues...
- Mr Pickwick's retirement in Dulwich is commemorated in the name of a local road, but at one time there was a more poignant reminder of the great man's presence...

- ...a sycamore tree, near Dulwich College, which Mr Pickwick was said to enjoy sitting under...even though the tree was not mentioned in *The Pickwick Papers* at all. By 1908, Mr Pickwick's Tree (as it was known) had rotted, and was taken down, and unfortunately today there seems to be no record at all of the tree's location. (Believe me, I have tried to find it.)

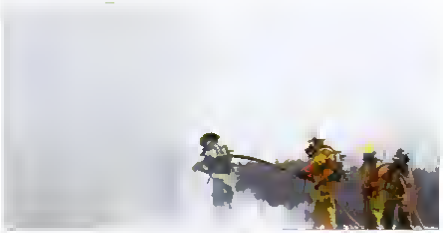
- Still, one can raise a glass in the tree's honour at the Alleyn's Head pub, named after the College's founder, Edward Alleyn, an Elizabethan actor, whose statue is shown below.

- Peter and I then visited another hostelry, The Prince Regent, where we noticed a print showing the boxer Daniel Mendoza, who is briefly mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick* - his picture was on the wall of The Castle Tavern, where the Daffy Club met.

- Then we travelled by bus to the place which, for me, was the emotional highlight of our entire tour: Tierney Road, SW2. In two houses in this road, numbers 18 and 38, lived Charles Montague Neale - the 'original' of Mr N, the man who spent fifteen years cataloguing every word in *The Pickwick Papers*.
- I have always said that the section about Mr N is my favourite part of *Death and Mr Pickwick* - and my editor at Random House, Dan Franklin, suggested that perhaps my love for Mr N arose because I share his obsessional tendencies. Well, perhaps. All I know is that when I came across a clipping about Neale in the Dickens Museum, my eyes lit up - here was something VERY interesting indeed.

- In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, Mr N lives elsewhere, in Holborn, and the details of the character's life are not exactly the same as Neale's. There is a section in the book where I have Mr N expressing the paranoid concern that someone else might be working on a similar catalogue - and it amused me to think that this 'someone else' might be the real counterpart of Mr N, namely Charles Montague Neale.
- I shall continue the account of my tour with Peter tomorrow.
-

August 27



Pickwick Fire Department receives $197K grant for gear

Fire Chief Adam Zimmerman announced that Pickwick Fire and Rescue, a non-paid volunteer fire and rescue agency in Winona County, has been awarded a $197,000 grant from the Federal Emergency

WWW.WINONADAILYNEWS.COM

- Michael Segers found this news story, from the American town of Pickwick, which is mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*.
- http://www.winonadailynews.com/lifestyles/neighbors/pickwick-fire-department-receives-k-grant-for-gear/article_799e7354-19ca-5822-be97-96c394863d88.html

August 27

The Book Gargoyle: The Pickwick Papers by Charles Dickens: Tracing Roots in Wodehouse & Tolkien
I first began The Pickwick Papers when I had finished my sixth or so rereading of Little Women at age 12
BOOKGARGOYLE.BLOGSPOT.COM

- Frank Bouchier-Hayes has has just posted this piece from a blog:
- http://bookgargoyle.blogspot.co.uk/2011/02/pickwick-papers-by-charles-dickens.html

August 28

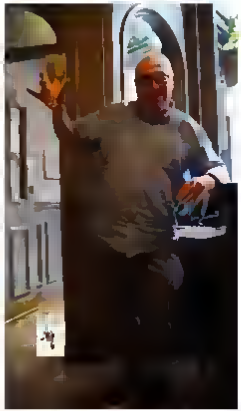
- Concluding my tour with Peter Stadlera...
- In *Deoth ond Mr Pickwick*, there is a mention of an actor, Mr Manders, whom Seymour sketches in the role of Mahomet Muggins, in the play *The Revolt of the Workhouse*. Thomas Manders also ran a pub, The Sun Tavern at 66 Long Acre, Covent Garden, London, a favourite theatrical rendezvous, which survives to this day, and which Peter and I visited on our tour. Check out the pub's website:
- www.thesuntaverncoventgarden.co.uk

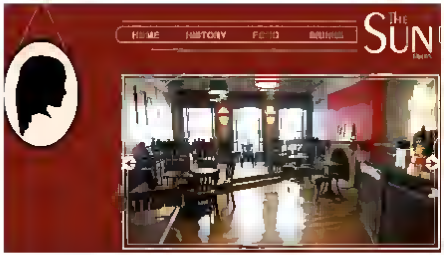
ACTORS BY DAYLIGHT,

AND PRACTISING IN THE PIT.

No. 83. SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 29, 1832. Price 1d.

MR. MACREADY.

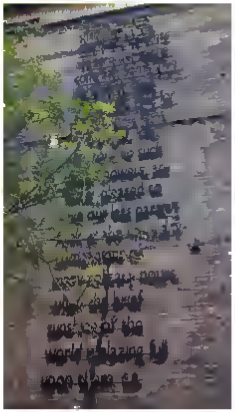




- This pub also plays a role in the history of *The Pickwick Papers*, because, during the period when Manders was in charge, it was home to one of the very earliest Pickwick Clubs which formed as a tribute to the book - indeed, it was possibly THE earliest, with the club being advertised in a newspaper in 1837, when the serial publication of *The Pickwick Papers* was still taking place. "Who fails to pay a visit on Tuesday and Friday evenings to Manders in Long Acre?" runs a report in the weekly journal *The Idler and Breakfast Table Companion*, noting that the club was "convivial". There are rumours indeed that Dickens himself visited the club more than once - and certainly there is a surviving letter from Dickens to the club's secretary, in which he replies to an invitation, saying that he was unable to attend.

- Afterwards, Peter and I finished our tour by strolling the short distance to The Porterhouse Brewing Co., a pub which I have posted about previously, because it was the location of the Cider Cellars, where Dickens and his friend Tom Potter used to drink.
- Cheers, everyone!

August 28



- Peter Stadlera's tour with me (see my posts of today and the previous three days) was just part of his personal Pickwickian tour. (The idea of a 'tour within a tour' indeed strikes me as rather reminiscent of The *Pickwick Papers* itself, with that book's stories within a story.) Here, Peter visits a part of a London where there is a quotation from *The Pickwick Papers* on a wall. The quotation is from the last pages of the novel, and reads: "There are dark shadows on the earth, but its lights are stronger in the contrast. Some men, like bats or owls, have better eyes for the darkness than for the light. We, who have no such optical powers, are better pleased to take our last parting look at the visionary companions of many solitary hours, when the brief sunshine of the world is blazing full upon them."

- Peter Stadlera: “On my Pickwickian Tour I also took a picture of the *Pickwick* quote on the building at 22 Leathermarket Street by Joseph Kosuth called *The Lost Porting Look*. The pub owner told me he had never read this quote but sees a lot of people passing by reading it. He told me that in the Leathermarket factory next door in the 80s a movie version of *Oliver Twist* was shot.

- "When walking round Bermondsey I found an old Victorian house with a picture of an illuminated woman and a cat lurking in the edge of a window (we were missing Sir Pelzi at that time)..

- "I also found these John Player Cards of Dickensian characters."

August 29

- There is a scene *in Death and Mr Pickwick*, where the son of Joseph Grimaldi says to the drunken actor Henry Kemble: 'Every notice I get says something similar: that young Grimaldi is the best clown there is, with the exception of his father. I am getting fed up with it. Why am I always the son of Grimaldi? Why never just me?' To which Kemble replies: "Son of Grimaldi. I'll tell you what - abbreviate it to S-O-G, SOG - every time you receive a notice like that, get soggy with me, and forget the world."
- That S-O-G acronym was suggested by my wife Elaine, and is derived from personal experience. You see, Elaine's father, Peter Edwards, is a double-Emmy winning TV lighting director. He has worked with many stars, including Bob Dylan...

- ...and David Copperfield.

- He has lit shows from *The Littlest Hobo*...

- ...to the cult Canadian sci-fi series *The Starlost*.

- Here is Peter on set with Peter O'Toole.

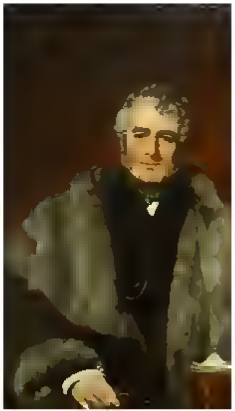
- And here is Peter in his office, with Elaine's mother Jeanne - and note the two Emmys on display. (Which he won for *The Dorothy Hamill Special* and *FDR: The Last Year.*) Elaine too has worked in TV all her life, in various roles, but she will be the first to admit that she has not reached the Emmy-winning heights of her father - and thus one can see an obvious parallel between the two Grimaldis, father and son, and the two Edwards, Peter and Elaine.

- So it was not a surprising that, when Elaine and I discussed the Grimaldi episode in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, it had echoes of her own experience. Indeed, when she started working in television she was known not as herself, but as the "Daughter of Peter Edwards"...which led to her being called by the unfortunate acronym D.O.P.E.

August 29

- Here is the latest post by Peter Stadlera about his Pickwickian tour. The artist Daniel Maclise, who painted the portrait of Dickens that Peter saw, was another person who originally featured in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, but I cut him out of the final draft of the manuscript.
- "On my Pickwickian Tour through London I saw an early portrait of Charles Dickens (1839) in the National Portrait Gallery.

- "The illustration *The Mohogony Tree* from Punch's jubilee edition in 1895 reminds me a lot of *Mr Pickwick oddresses the Club*.



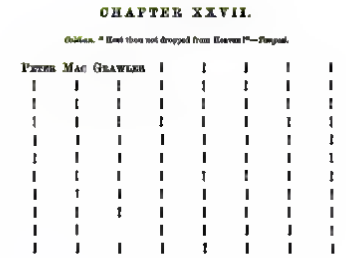
- “Lord Melbourne looked at me from a picture...

- "... and I saw a Victorian woman in a black dress (well, looking at her I had to think about the Hollies song *Long Cool Woman In A Black Dress*). I can only recommend the National Portrait Gallery to you when in London. The admission is free."

August 29

- CANADIAN LAUNCH....SEPTEMBER 22nd!!!!
- Wolverine is very angry that he hasn't been able to get his claws on a copy of *Death and Mr Pickwick* yet....but he hasn't long to wait...

August 30



CHAPTER XXVII.

Children. " Hast thou not dropped from Heaven?"—Faustus.

PETER MAG GRAWLER

- There is a moment in *Death and Mr Pickwick* when Mr Inbelicate shows Scripty a book representing the worst excesses of the era of three volume novels which preceded *The Pickwick Papers* an era when writing style was influenced by the simple need to fill up pages. "He opened a novel," says Scripty, "and showed me a chapter consisting of a one-line quotation from Shakespeare, a character's name, and a block of 104 widely spaced exclamation marks "
- That novel is unidentified in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, but it was actually *Paul Clifford*, by Edward Bulwer Lytton Here you can see those exclamation marks, in two formats, closely spaced (see next page) which probably works best in conveying surprise, and widely-spaced, where they obviously fill up more paper, but are so far apart they lose the very sense of being exclamatory

CHAPTER XXVII.

PETER MacGRAWLER'''''

- *Paul Clifford* is also notorious for its opening words "It was a dark and stormy night." This opener has inspired The Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest, in which entrants are invited "to compose the opening sentence to the worst of all possible novels" - that is, deliberately bad. Check out the contest's website at: www.bulwer-lytton.com

- The winner of the 2015 contest.

- Although Bulwer-Lytton and his works are not mentioned elsewhere in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I do quote from Dickens's letter to Seymour about *The Stroller's Tale* where Dickens refers to his "many literary friends, on whose judgement I place great reliance" who believe the tale will create a "considerable sensation" - and I have seen it suggested that Bulwer-Lytton was one of those friends. Though I have also seen it suggested - I believe in a work by Professor Robert Patten - that Dickens probably didn't show the tale to anyone, and that he refers to the "literary friends" merely to add weight to his argument. This is why I have Seymour say in anger: "And who are these literary friends?"

August 30

- Here is the latest post by Peter Stadlera, arising from his tour of sites relating to *Death and Mr Pickwick*. This one centres on the song *Champagne Charlie*, and it strikes me that if we ever get a *Death and Mr Pickwick* convention up and running, this is the song that would be a great closer for the convention.

- "On my Pickwickian Tour I found, underneath Charing Cross Station, Champagne Charlies.

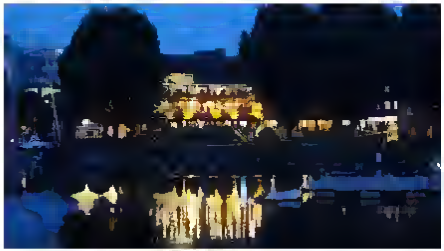
- “It's a traditional ale and port house, featuring an expansive cellar of housewines and champagne. Cosy and rustic. Champagne Charlies features sawdust-covered floors, candlelit tables and intimate alcoves.

"Champagne Charlie" (Geo Leybourne) Sung by Tommy Trinder C 1943

- "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we hear Moses Pickwick singing the *Champagne Charlie* song. I found a classic version on youtube:
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxAREbaEIhg

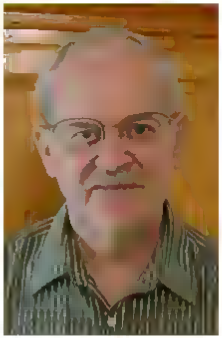
- "After the Victorian section in the National Portrait Gallery I had a very dry mouth...

- ....so we went to the pub The Pillars of Hercules where I had a quick pint of cider for Refreshment.



- “In the evening we went to the St Catherine Yard near the Tower Bridge where we found the Dickens Inn.”

August 31

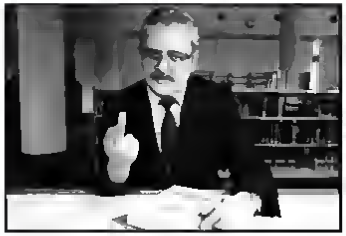


- In a historical novel like *Death and Mr Pickwick*, most of the characters are based on real people, and so characterisation usually involves taking a few recorded traits of a person, and fleshing them out. When I discovered that George Norton, the violent husband of Caroline Norton, was noted for his foul and blasphemous language, my past writings on unusual leisure activities came to my aid - because I once interviewed the world's leading expert on abusive language, Dr Reinhold Aman, who saw it as his life's mission to collect and analyse every obscenity and curse ever uttered by mankind.

- From 1977 to 2005, Dr Aman published and edited *Maledicta*, The International Journal of Verbal Aggression. Running your eyes down the contents page of *Maledicta*, you would find academic papers such as the following.

- Talking Dirty in Cuban Spanish
  Swearing in Australian Football
  Black Excremental Poetry
  Greek Fist-Phallus Gestures
  Glossary of Fart Euphemisms
  Elementary Georgian Obscenity
  Offensive Rock Band Names - A Linguistic Taxonomy

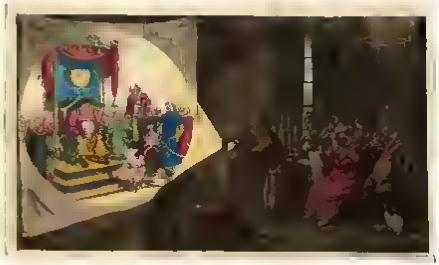
- When I interviewed Dr Aman, he confessed to a liking for Yiddish insults. "A good Yiddish insult will begin in a way that gets you to drop your offences," he said, "and then poke you right in the eye." Good examples would be. "May you have three shiploads of gold - and it should not be enough to pay your doctor's bill" and "May you become famous - they should name a disease after you."



- But if you are easily offended, particularly by blasphemy, I suggest you stop reading now.
- Because Dr Aman also told me that, in his opinion, the people who have the worst insults in the world are the Hungarians and Romanians, who manage to combine blasphemy, sex and bodily functions to produce language so vile that it might be considered exquisite. Dr Aman then told me of what he regards as the most offensive curse of all, and it emanates from this region of the world. It provided the inspiration for George Norton's blasphemous rant in *Death and Mr Pickwick*. I'll insert asterisks to tone it down a little, but here it is: "May God slap you in the face with his c*ck, which is covered in sh*t from f*cking Jesus."

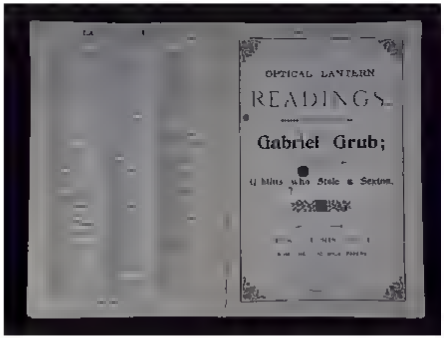
September 1

- When Dickens was a child, his nurse Mary Weller would put on magic lantern shows...



- ...and here you can see a slide I mention in *Death and Mr Pickwick*.

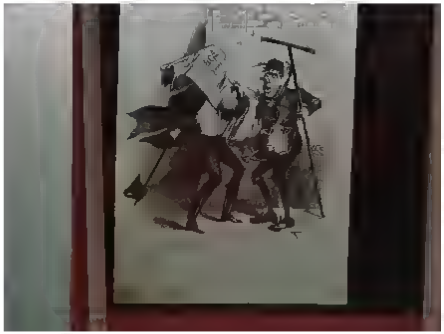
- And its sequel!



- It seems likely that a love of the magic lantern inspired the section of *The Pickwick Papers* in which the hardhearted gravedigger Gabriel Grub is captured by goblins - just as with a lantern show, the goblins reveal images in the darkness, only their images are projected within rolling clouds, rather than upon a calico sheet or a bare wall. Strangely enough, the story of Gabriel Grub was later turned into a series of magic lantern slides itself, as you can see.

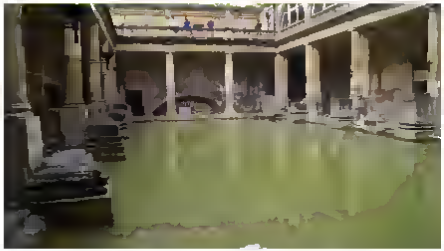
- In passing, it's worth noting that Grub's story, which appeared in the Christmas number of *The Pickwick Papers*, is an obvious forerunner of *A Christmas Carol*, with Grub as a prototype Scrooge. The Carol too was adapted for the magic lantern.

- However, it came as a surprise when I discovered recently on ebay that some of Seymour's drawings had also been turned into lantern slides...



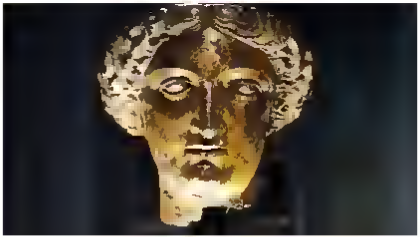
- ...including the notorious picture *Better Luck Next Time*. It is difficult to know why the slides were made, although it is certainly true that the collection of drawings called *Sketches by Seymour* remained popular for some years after Seymour's death, and the drawings it contained, including the ones shown here, were reprinted on a number of occasions. There were only six Seymour slides on ebay, which I purchased, but I am wondering whether any more Seymour slides are out there...

September 1



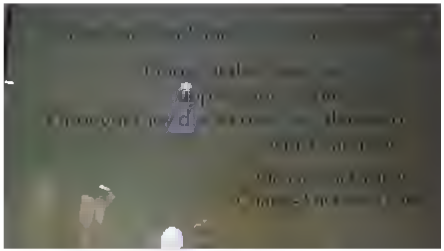
- Here is another of Peter Stadlera's brilliant posts, about his Pickwickian tour.
- "Now our Pickwickian Tour takes a stop in Bath. We visited the best preserved Roman thermal baths in the world...

- "...my wife touched Minerva's head (I won't write any funny comments here)...

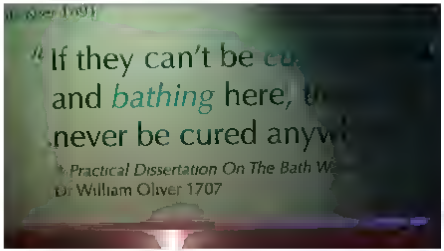


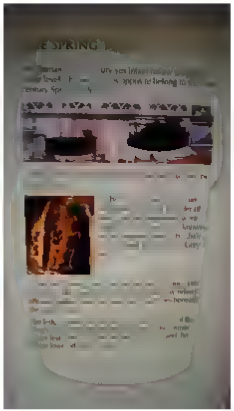
- "...we had an audience with King Bladud...

- "...and drank lukewarm water from the spring.



- "Among the quotations on display was one from *The Pickwick Papers*."

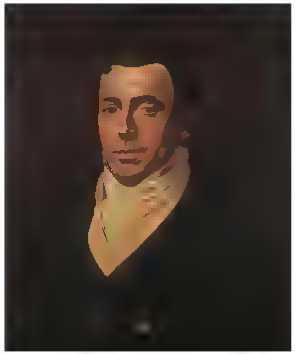

If they can't be cu
and bathing here, t
never be cured anyw
Practical Dissertation On The Bath W
Dr William Oliver 1707



September 2

- In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I tell the story of Day and Martin's blacking, which was famous for being the brand used by Sam Weller in *The Pickwick Papers*, and you will see here advertising cards produced by the company.

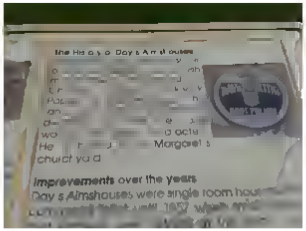
A Delicate Compliment.—*Lady* Would you recommend Day & Martin's Blacking?" *Shopkeeper.* "Certainly Madam. Nothing is so pleasing to the eye. You have only to look at your boot and you will always *see your face in it*."



- This is a portrait of the company's founder, Charles Day.

- Yesterday, I was delighted to meet Neil Price, who is the great-great-grandson of Day. We met beside Day's tomb at St Margaret's Church in Edgware...

- ...and then moved on to the almshouse which Day established nearby. A signpost outside the almshouse mentions *The Pickwick Papers*.



- Neil is currently doing research for a book on Day – and the extraordinary thing is that Charles Day's life has an echo of Dickens's lies about the origins of *Pickwick*
- Neil originally believed that he was descended from a certain "John Price". Neil knew nothing at all about Price, apart from a couple of vague snippets which had been passed down in his family – that Price was a manufacturer of gold lace, who had possibly died during Reform Bill riots in the 1830s. However, when Neil started doing research into his family's history, he could find no evidence to support these snippets. Indeed, he could find out nothing at all about Price. Dead end followed dead end, until eventually Neil discovered the truth: John Price did not exist.
- "John Price" was an identity invented by Charles Day to cover up the fact that he had fathered three illegitimate children, by his wife's cousin. The name was entered on the children's baptism certificates, and all three grew up believing their father was the imaginary John Price

- When Neil told me this, I thought of course of the lie which I uncovered in the course of researching *Death and Mr Pickwick* - that a man had been invented, the supposed "original" of Mr Pickwick, in order to take credit away from Robert Seymour, the true inventor of Mr Pickwick.

- You will recall that a recent unfavourable review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* by a Dickensian accused me of coming up with conspiracy theories "that would make Oliver Stone take a step back." The review was garbage. And now, Neil has found another example of how a non-existent person was simply fabricated into existence because it served someone's interest to do so - and I am wondering just how common this sort of practice was in days gone by, before the official census.

September 2

- Here is the latest instalment of the great Peter Stadlera's Pickwickian Tour
- "Today our Pickwickian Tour goes to the Pump Room of Bath and our guide Charles Dickens (to us only Charlie) explains: 'The Great Pump Room is a spacious saloon, ornamented with Corinthian pillars, and a music-gallery, and

- "...a Tompion clock, and a statue of Nash, and a golden inscription, to which all the water-drinkers should attend, for it appeals to them in the cause of a deserving charity.

- "'There is a large bar with a marble vase, out of which the pumper gets the water; and there are a number of yellow-looking tumblers, out of which the company get it; and it is a most edifying and satisfactory sight to behold the perseverance and gravity with which they swallow it. There are baths near at hand, in which a part of the company wash themselves; and...

- "'a band plays afterwards, to congratulate the remainder on their having done so. There is another pump room, into which infirm ladies and gentlemen are wheeled, in such an astonishing variety of chairs and chaises, that any adventurous individual who goes in with the regular number of toes, is in imminent danger of coming out without them; and there is a third, into which the quiet people go, for it is less noisy than either. There is an immensity of promenading, on crutches and off, with sticks and without, and a great deal of conversation, and liveliness, and pleasantry."

September 3

PICKWICK PICS
DO YOU THINK RAW OYSTERS ARE HEALTHY, MR. PICK?
I DON'T KNOW, MR. WICK. I NEVER HEARD ONE COMPLAIN!
TURN OVER FOR MORE
UP IN THE AIR? RELAX WITH PICKWICK ALE

- I recently discovered these coasters from Boston, dating from the 1940s, which use the name of Pickwick for a brand of beer. However, they are so detached from Seymour's creation that the image of the character has vanished, and Mr Pickwick has even been broken down into two separate men, Mr Pick and Mr Wick, who form a comedy double act.

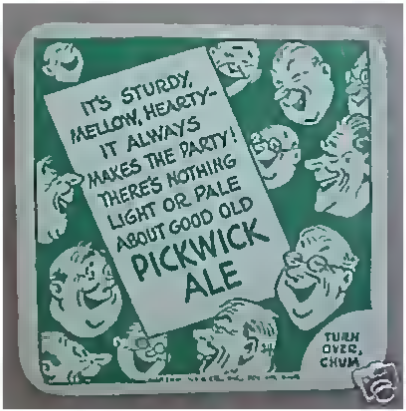
PICKWICK PICS
MY UNCLE PLAYS THE PIANO BY EAR, MR. PICK!
THAT'S NOTHING, MR. WICK, MY UNCLE FIDDLES WITH HIS WHISKERS
TURN OVER CHUM!
WHAT'S THE PRETTY LADY LOOKING FOR? SHE'S AFTER THE BOYS WHO USED UP ALL HER STUDY, FULL BODIED PICKWICK

PICKWICK PICS
WHY DOES A GIRAFFE HAVE SUCH A LONG NECK, MR. PICK?
BECAUSE ITS HEAD IS SO FAR FROM ITS BODY, MR. WICK!
PICKWICK TASTES MIGHTY GOOD

PICKWICK PICS
HOW CAN I AVOID FALLING HAIR MR. PICK?
EASY, MR. WICK, — JUMP OUT OF THE WAY!
SCRAM!
TURN OVER, CHUM!
PARDON US FOR INTRUDING BUT, FOR A REAL EVENING'S ENJOYMENT, STICK WITH CONVIVIAL, HEARTY PICKWICK

PICKWICK PICS
WHY DOES A RED-HEADED WOMAN ALWAYS MARRY A MEEK MAN, MR. PICK?
SHE DOESN'T, MR. WICK, HE JUST GETS THAT WAY!
TURN OVER, CHUM!
THESE OLD TIMERS KNOW ALE AS WELL AS WOMEN THEY KNOW PICKWICK ALE - AN HONEST, HUSKY, MAN'S BREW

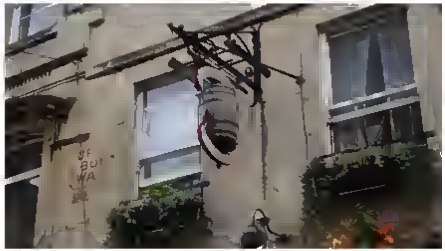
PICKWICK PICS
HOW DID YOU FIND THE WEATHER TODAY MR. PICK?
EASY MR. WICK. YOU JUST GO OUTSIDE AND THERE IT IS!
TURN OVER, CHUM
PICKWICK-MAN, HOW SMOOTH IT TASTES


IT'S STURDY, MELLOW, HEARTY- IT ALWAYS MAKES THE PARTY! THERE'S NOTHING LIGHT OR PALE ABOUT GOOD OLD PICKWICK ALE
TURN OVER, CHUM

- And this is a photo I took some years ago, when I went on a tour of a Boston brewery – in this cabinet of breweriana was a statuette of Mr Pickwick, which the guide told us, was for a pre-prohibition brand of Pickwick beer. It is not surprising that Mr Pickwick, the world's most famous boozer, inspired the name of a pre-prohibition beer. Indeed, in that period, *The Pickwick Papers* became highly controversial for all its depictions of the pleasures of drinking, and there were moves to ban the book, as I show in a scene in *Death and Mr Pickwick*. The Canadian humorist Stephen Leacock even produced a short story, *The Dry Pickwick*, which imagined the forces of prohibition publishing a version of the book in which all the alcohol was removed.
- It seems that Pickwick beer was launched again after prohibition was repealed, but by then the novel was in decline, and the image of Mr Pickwick was no longer so potent a symbol of drinking. Hence, the name was retained, but the character was broken down into Mr Pick and Mr Wick.

September 3

- Here is another superb post by Peter Stadlera, as he continues his Pickwickian tour. Below is one of the images he saw in this pub.



- "In Bath we found a very fine pub named Sam Wellers. They had delicious Chicken Tikka, Stowford Press Cider and...

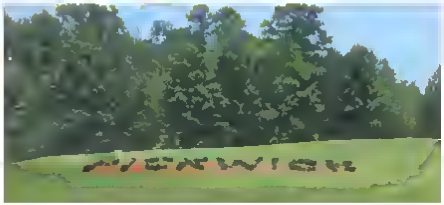
- "...impressive illustrations on the wall. This week, Stephen met Neil Price who is the great great grandson of Day, part of Day and Martin's blacking, which was famous for being the brand used by Sam Weller in *The Pickwick Papers*. We saw the first appearance of Samuel Weller in *The Pickwick Papers* ...and Sam writing a valentine...

- "... heard the Bath Mail Coach rattle by and studied a coaching poster..

- "...met Charles Dickens in a hurry...

- "...and observed Dickens placing his first literary contribution in the editor's box. The illustration was done by a man named J. Stephenson. I had a very close look at the name due to the similarity to our beloved author of *Death and Mr Pickwick*. I'm leaving now, but I'll be back with more!"

September 3

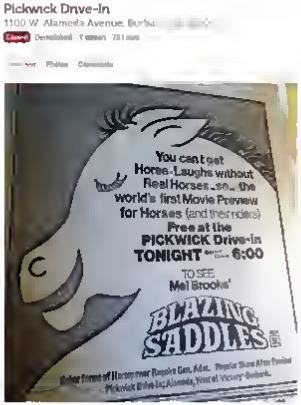


- In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I talk of how the *Pickwick* phenomenon led to numerous places worldwide being called *Pickwick*. Simon Carmio has just sent me a selection of images demonstrating the impact of *Pickwick*'s name. Many thanks, Simon.

- This is Pickwick Landing
  Site: http://tnstateparks.com/parks/about/pickwick-landing

Pickwick Shine Service
Housekeeping & Janitorial
Residential * Rental * New
Construction * Boats * Yachts
Reasonable * Prompt * Professional
"LET IT SHINE"
(731) 412 2147

Pickwick Jewellers & Pawnbrokers
Jewellery Repairs
& Cleaning


Pickwick Drive-In
You can't get Horse-Laughs without Real Horses...so... the world's first Movie Preview for Horses (and their rides)
Free at the PICKWICK Drive-in
TONIGHT 6:00
TO SEE
Mel Brooks'
BLAZING SADDLES

- Pickwick Theater, Burbank, Los Angeles:
- http://articles.latimes.com/1989-10-08/local/me-287_1_pickwick-theater

September 4

- There is a scene in *Death and Mr Pickwick* where the young Dickens is meeting applicants for the job of the *Pickwick* illustrator. There is one anonymous applicant who makes a very brief appearance, and is rejected - he is described merely as "an extraordinarily tall and monocled man." This applicant was actually the novelist William Makepeace Thackeray.

- I had originally intended to feature Thackeray as a character, and as preparation I read his early work *The Yellowplush Papers* - a series of sketches, originally published in *Fraser's Magazine* - but alas, Thackeray's role had to be edited out in the final draft of the manuscript, leaving just a brief mention, which is now really an "in-joke" for those people who know that Thackeray applied to be the *Pickwick* artist.

- You'll see here a sketch by Maclise, The Fraserians, in which the young Thackeray is the monocled man on the left.

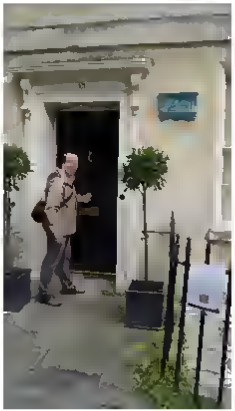
- Also, here are the three sketches which Thackeray took to that meeting with Dickens. (Thanks to Herb Moskovitz of the e-journal *The Electronic Buzfuz* for publishing a link to these in the last issue.)

B Z

- Towards the end of *Deoth ond Mr Pickwick*, there is a brief mention of Thackeray, in connection with his role as editor of *The Cornhill Mogozine*. Partly I mentioned this as a 'relic' of a larger role which Thackeray might have played in *Deoth ond Mr Pickwick*, but also partly because it brought back a memory of my childhood. My grandfather ran a secondhand bookshop in London, later taken over by my uncle, and I can remember visiting the shop after my uncle's death, and seeing many old issues of the *Cornhill Mogozine*, which had a long run, and only ceased publication in 1975.

September 4

- This is Peter Stadlera's latest post about his tour, in which he mentions W.S. Landor. There is an interesting connection between Landor and *Death and Mr Pickwick*. As readers of my novel will know, Dickens's agent and biographer John Forster appears as an unscrupulous figure, who was quite prepared to fabricate "facts" if it served his purpose. My understanding of Forster as this sort of character emerged when I started looking into what historians thought of his work - and he had no reputation at all. I also came across an old academic paper on Forster's treatment of Landor - and Forster was not only prepared to invent a statement in a letter from Wordsworth which did not exist in the original, but even had the audacity to insert a footnote explaining Wordsworth's comment!

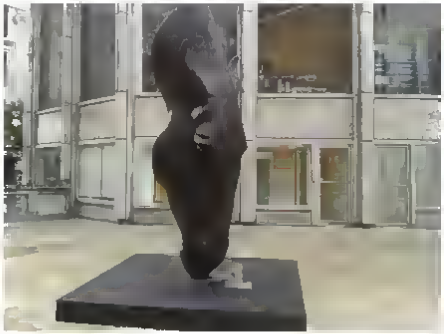


- "At 35 St James Square, Bath, lived Dickens's friend W.S. Landor. Landor was Godfather to one of Dickens' sons, Walter Landor Dickens. It is said that, whilst staying with Landor in 1840, Dickens first thought of Little Nell, and that the Old Curiosity Shop was fashioned on No 34, whilst the character of Boythorn in *Dombey and Son* was modelled on Landor.

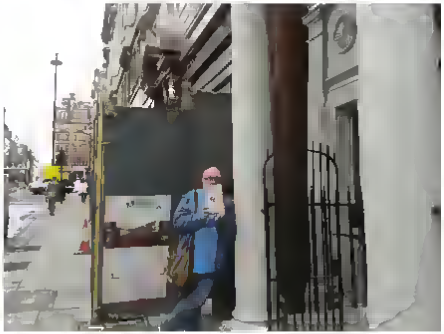
- "Diagonally opposite on the other side of the street I found this old shop sign reading 'Chemist'. I thought Charles could have bought his Beecham pills in there."

September 5

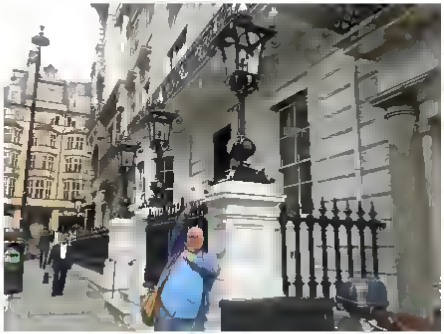
- I was in the Piccadilly area of London the other day, which has a number of locations connected to *Death and Mr Pickwick*. Let's start in St James's Street, where the great cartoonist James Gillray is said to have attempted suicide by hurling himself from an upper floor, but was prevented from doing so when his head got stuck in the bars outside his window.



- Gillray was living in the house next to Boodles Club, not far from the horse's head statue.



- Unfortunately the house was covered by hoardings when I went there.

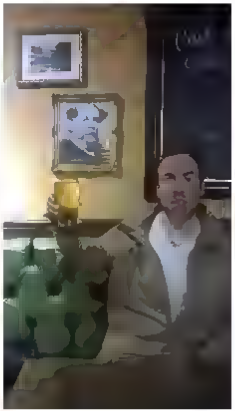


- You'll see too a pic of me outside White's Club. When standing outside the club, I realised that I had made a minor error in *Death and Mr Pickwick* by referring to the horrified spectators from White's "opposite" Gillray's place, shouting when they saw the artist hanging from the window, with his dangling legs and oversize bottom on display - because White's is NOT opposite, and I think I was misled by reading the work of a previous writer on Gillray. It's an interesting question as to whether such an error should be amended in a future edition of *Death and Mr Pickwick*. Part of me thinks there is a certain charm in leaving an error like that uncorrected. Also, *The Pickwick Papers* started the tradition of "blooper spotting". I mentioned this in a previous post, when I spoke about the *Pickwick* enthusiast Percy Fitzgerald, who found numerous errors in the text of *The Pickwick Papers*, and even published a book about them. Leaving an error like the White's one in place therefore echoes *Pickwick*, which is something I always intended to do.

September 5

- Peter Stadlera continues his Pickwickian tour....
- "We continued our Pickwickian Tour and went into The Saracen's Head, a very old traditional tavern, where Dickens is said to have stayed.

THE SARACENS
HEAD TAVERN



- "We enjoyed fine pub food and had some ciders. (Cheers Stephen!) They also had some interesting pictures on the walls...

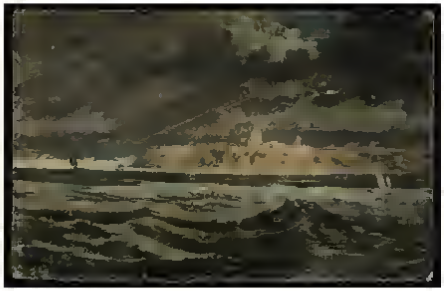
- “See you soon and cheers!”

September 6

- Continuing my *Death and Mr Pickwick* rambles in the Piccadilly area of London...
- At 192-194 Piccadilly, is a building which at one time was the home of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colour. The building is now used by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA), but above street level you can see a relic of its original purpose in the form of eight busts of artists.

- The third of these is Thomas Girtin, who features in *Death and Mr Pickwick*.

- When I was researching the novel, it was a great moment of revelation when I discovered that Mrs Vaughan, the wife of the pattern designer to whom Seymour was apprenticed as a boy, was Girtin's mother, and that Girtin had died young Though Mrs Vaughan is a shadowy figure, and very little is known about her, it seemed to me highly plausible that she would have encouraged Seymour in his artistic pursuits, as a substitute for her deceased son - for how else can one explain the fact that Seymour became an artist at all, initially aiming to become an oil painter, and a practitioner of "high art"? He had to find time for practice, and for the development of his talent - and a typical pattern designer's apprentice would simply have drawn repetitive, stylised motifs
- Mrs Vaughan attributed her son's early death to his passion for painting in all weathers - that he was killed by "damp air" - so here are a couple of Girtin's works which could be seen as his murderers. First, *Stonehenge in a Thunderstorm*



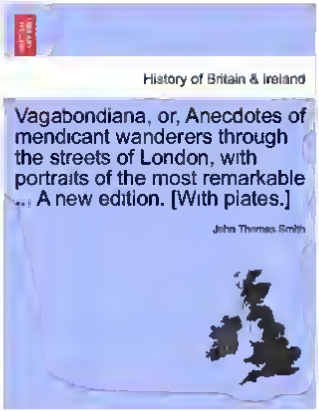
- And this is *Tynemouth Priory from the Sea*.
- Incidentally, although Seymour didn't complete his apprenticeship, I discovered that he must have remained friendly with the Vaughan family, even after Mrs Vaughan's death, because he is a witness to Mr Vaughan's will.
- More Pickwickian rambles in Piccadilly tomorrow.

September 6

- Here are the latest pics of Sir Pelzi, the official D*eath and Mr Pickwick* cat.

September 6

- Wong Sarah has just done some research about a character who is mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, the beggarwoman Anne Siggs. This is what Sarah says:
- "I am awakened by the rich details and vast spectrum of topics covered in *Death and Mr. Pickwick*: a robust catapult of knowledge enrichment. During the reading, I came across an interesting conversation between Joseph Severn and Robert Seymour at the gates of Hoxton House, in which they cover their passion for portraiture and tell anecdotes of Mrs. Siddons, a famous Georgian tragedian. After a while, the name of 'Anne Siggs' came alive on the paper:
- "'But when I am in the drawing office at Vaughan's, every morning there is a tall, ugly beggarwoman on crutches who passes by in the street. You always hear her, scraping the ground and calling for alms, and if you look out the window, there she is. Everyone in the area knows her – she is called Anne Siggs. But she has two unusual qualities. First, she is spotlessly clean, which is mystifying. Second, she tells everyone her sister is Mrs. Siddons, and that the actress refuses to acknowledge her own flesh and blood.'


History of Britain & Ireland
Vagabondiana, or, Anecdotes of mendicant wanderers through the streets of London, with portraits of the most remarkable ... A new edition. [With plates.]
John Thomas Smith

- "These unusual attributes were intriguing; I wanted to gain more information on this eccentric but scrupulous beggar. She was mentioned in many sources, including *The Streets of London: Anecdotes of Their More Celebrated Residents*; and *Vagabondiana, or Anecdotes of Mendicant Wanderers through the Streets of London*, both by John Thomas Smith (1766-1833), an English painter, engraver and antiquarian.

- "Anne Siggs was born in May (year unknown) into a respectable family, whose father Moses Siggs was an industrious breeches maker in Dorking, Surrey. However, he had an accident which resulted in deformity and early death. Moses's expertise in astrology once portended his daughter would constantly encounter 'a variety of wretchedness'. The death of Moses Siggs left the family in destitution, Anne was received into several families until she was around 20 years of age. She resided in various areas in London - Swallow Street for thirty years, Upper John Street, and Golden Square. Rheumatism meant she had to get up at nine and wander around till two. In her life she was 'knocked down, pinched, horsewhipped' and incurred all sorts of maltreatment, which enfeebled her senses and she ended up using crutches. Unable to be a seamstress, Anne received life allowances from a churchwarden due to her religious devotion. Living in a back garret, not only her clothes but also her apartment were remarkably clean. Anne Siggs was often visited by doves and magpies at home, and kept an owl by herself

- Mrs. Salmon's Waxworks exhibited a wax figure of Anne Siggs in 1812 at 17 Fleet Street

- "This alternated with a waxwork of Mother Shipton - the hidden treadle at the step would all of a sudden 'incense' Mother Shipton to kick and slap patrons with her broom!"

September 7

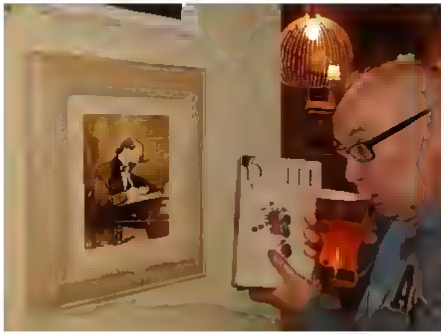
- Concluding my *Pickwick*-in-Piccadilly rambles...
- In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, Robert Seymour boards a coach at the White Horse Cellar in London, which will take him to the village of Pickwick in Wiltshire. The White Horse Cellar was a huge coaching terminus, and was originally located where the Ritz hotel now stands.

- By Seymour's time, though, the Cellar had moved to the building diagonally opposite The Ritz (see below) and you can also see on the left a painting by James Pollard showing the building as Seymour would have known it

- On a personal note, The Ritz could not fail to remind me of a song from my teenage years, *Ritz* by Steve Harley. I have mentioned this song before, with its bizarre clown imagery:
- *"Oh! the clown, his store is eyeless Shall he make you lough or cry, yes"* -
- I am sure the song helped to form an interest in the sad clown motif, which is so crucial in *Deoth ond Mr Pickwick*. I recently discovered that a clown suit worn by Harley was auctioned at Bonhams in 2005, and here it is. But onward with my tour...

- Here I am in Paxton and Whitfield's, the cheesemongers to the Royal Family. The shop has been in existence for over 200 years, and one can certainly imagine James Gillray stopping at Paxton and Whitfield s to purchase a quarter of cheddar when he took a break from drawing his cartoons. I wrote about this shop some years ago, and I can remember talking to the manager about his belief that some men simply had more sensitive palates than others - and this underlies the part in *Death and Mr Pickwick* concerning the gluttonous actor James Quin: 'He took it as absolutely true that, just as men exist in different shapes, sizes and colours, so there are men born with exquisitely sensitive palates, capable of discerning minute differences in taste.' The shop is an Aladdin's Cave of cheese, and if you are ever in the area I highly recommend popping in.

- This picture was taken in St James's Square, where the publisher John Macrone had his office. Macrone published Dickens's compilation of articles and stories, *Sketches by Boz*, which appeared just before Chapman and Hall offered Dickens the *Pickwick* project.



- That was the end of my Piccadilly rambles, because I set off for Edgware to meet the descendant of blacking manufacturer Charles Day. I posted about this a few days ago. But by now, my historical researches had – as they usually do – built up a powerful hunger and thirst. And so, on the way back from Edgware, I stopped at The Flask pub in Hampstead. Here I noticed a couple of pictures of Dickens..

- Then I launched myself into a very tasty Flaskburger!

September 7

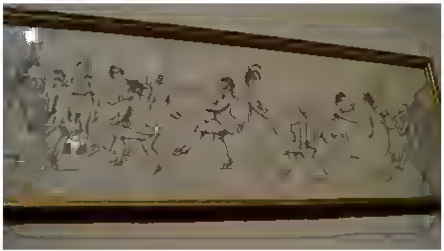
- In my last post, I mentioned the White Horse Cellar, where people caught coaches to the west country. Strangely enough, Peter Stadlera, in the latest instalment of his Pickwickian tour, has posted a picture of the coaching inn which was the destination for so many westbound coaches - The White Hart Inn, run by Moses Pickwick.

- Note the famous statue of the White Hart in front of the inn. I have never seen this painting before - great pic, Peter!
- "Today we start our Pickwickian Tour with the legendary White Hart Coaching Inn which was later run by Moses Pickwick as we know from reading *Death and Mr Pickwick*. I've found a great painting of the White Hart when it still was a very busy place and in full use.

- "After all this bustling traffic at a coaching inn let's turn to a fascinating series of illustrations called *Lumps of Pudding* done by Henry William Bunbury. They can be seen in the Victoria Gallery at Bath. We see a country dance: 18 couples in a strip design performing a minuet dance with awkward vigour.

- "One of the ladies even has a wooden leg (in every novel of Charles Dickens there is a character with a wooden leg).

- "Below the title was this verse:
- *'What an elegant Set—What a bustling af Rumps!*
  What a Sweet Tae ta Tae-ing af Slippers and Pumps!
  At the sight my Old Drumsticks are ready ta Prance
  There is nathing I lave sa as seeing Falks Dance.'
- My wife and I were laughing aut laud at the scenes depicted here.
- Bunbury *af* caurse gets a mentian in *Death and Mr Pickwick.*"



September 7

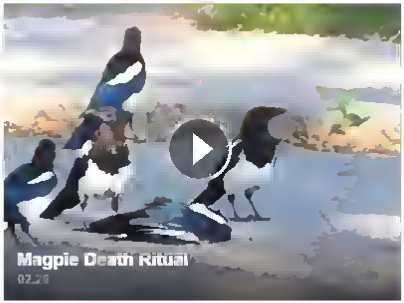
'Are You John Lennon?'

The legendary reporter's classic column on the night John Lennon was shot.

THE BEAST

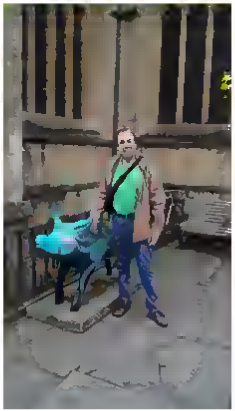
- The assassination of John Lennon is featured towards the end of *Death and Mr Pickwick*. Peter Stadlera has just posted this article about the tragic event.
- http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/09/05/best-of-breslin-are-you-john-lennon.html?source=TDB&via=FB_Page

September 7



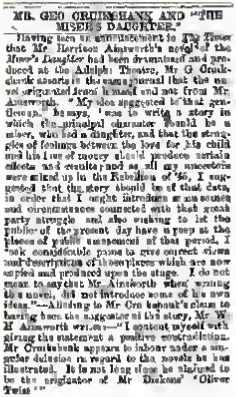
- A magpie appears near the start of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, and "curses" the Seymour family. Michael Segers has just posted this video of a magpie death ritual. Such rituals have been known about for years, but have only recently been captured on film.
- https://www.facebook.com/zaydzayan/videos/vb.100002073799148/886059274806524/?type=2&theater

September 8



- Here is Peter Stadlera in Bath with one of King Bladud's pigs!

September 8



MR. GEO CRUIKSHANK AND "THE MISER'S DAUGHTER."

Having been an announcement in The Times that Mr. Harrison Ainsworth's novel of the Miser's Daughter had been dramatised and produced at the Adelphi Theatre, Mr G Cruikshank asserts in the same journal that the novel originated from a hint and not from Mr. Ainsworth. "My idea suggested to that gentleman," he says, "was to write a story in which the principal character should be a miser, with had a daughter, and that the struggles of feelings between the love for his child and his love of money should produce certain effects and results such as all my ancestors were mixed up in the Rebellion of '45. I suggested that the story should be of that date, in order that I might introduce as an accessory and circumstances connected with that great party struggle and also wishing to let the public of the present day have a peep at the places of public amusement of that period. I took considerable pains to give correct views and descriptions of the localities which are now copied and produced upon the stage. I do not mean to say that Mr. Ainsworth when writing this novel, did not introduce some of his own ideas."—Alluding to Mr Cruikshank's claim to having been the suggester of this story, Mr W H Ainsworth writes:—"I content myself with giving the statement a positive contradiction. Mr Cruikshank appears to labour under a singular delusion in regard to the novels he has illustrated. It is not long since he claimed to be the originator of Mr Dickens' 'Oliver Twist.'"

- Sarah has been continuing her Pickwickian investigations, and she has found a couple of very interesting articles.
- Regarding this piece on Cruikshank: it was indeed the case that Cruikshank claimed to have originated *Oliver Twist*, and although I would not claim to be an expert on *Twist*, I seem to remember reading in the works of Professor Robert Patten (who is an expert on Cruikshank) that the claim might have some substance.

Mr. Pickwick Still Has His Umbrella

Bath, Mar. 14

It rained in Bath today, but Mr William Pickwick was quite prepared for it He still had his umbrella.

The county court of Bath confirmed Mr. Pickwick as the lawful owner of the said umbrella yesterday and disallowed the claim of Miss Pauline Alberta MacFie, whose ancestors were loyal supporters of Bonnie Prince Charlie.

The umbrella originally belonged to Miss MacFie's sister, the late Mrs. Bulstan Withers. Pickwick told the Court Mrs. Withers gave him the umbrella in 1946 and that he used it at her funeral in 1948.

Miss MacFie swore that in 1948 Mrs Withers promised the umbrella to a friend Miss Blanche Bedford. After Mrs. Withers' death Miss MacFie said, she sent to Pickwick demanding that he surrender the umbrella to Miss Bedford.

"I received an astounding letter from a relative of Mr Pickwick, saying I had sending Miss Bedford 30 shillings to buy a new umbrella."

"I took it as bribery and corruption. I returned the 30 shillings and said that in 1746 [illegible] Bonnie Charlie. We are not to be bought for 30 shillings."

The Judge ruled that the umbrella was Mr. Pickwick's.

Miss MacFie shouted, "Grasping man, despicable people!"

She was removed by the bailiff. Mr Pickwick walked out quietly—with his umbrella.

—United Press.

CUSTOMERS LAY ON FLOOR

New York, Mar. 14.

Three young bandits fought a gun battle with two policemen in a Broadway district cafe today one of them was captured. The other two escaped and were thought to be possibly wounded.

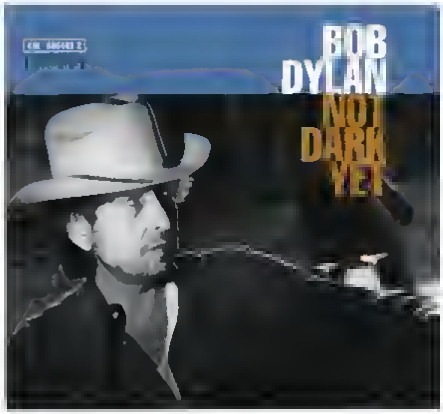
There was a fusillade of shots when the two constables entered the cafe at the Park Central Hotel to investigate a report that a holdup was going on. Instead they found three gunmen trying to rob customers. The police opened fire, [illegible]

- Regarding this piece on Mr Pickwick's umbrella: in the heyday of *The Pickwick Papers*, newspapers would always love to have a real "Mr Pickwick" appear in a story, because there would be a guaranteed smile from the idea of Mr Pickwick doing something like being involved in a court battle.

September 9

- I wanted *Death and Mr Pickwick* to include bits and pieces of modernity - I saw it as important to embed the story of *The Pickwick Papers* in our times, as much as in the nineteenth century - and so for instance one gets a mention of a flip-chart at the start of the book, and much later on, a mention of the *Alien* movie franchise. But probably the most powerful indication of modernity was the use of references to pop music
- Using lyrics from pop music, though, is a very tricky matter, because legally it is governed by the same rules that apply to poetry - if you directly quote from the song, you have to get permission from the writer, and this will normally involve paying a fee. At the start of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, there is a page of quotes, and I had originally thought of using there a line about a holy fool which appears in the Lady Gaga song *Judas*, because Mr Pickwick has sometimes been seen as following in the tradition of holy fools - innocent Christ-like figures who act foolishly in the eyes of men

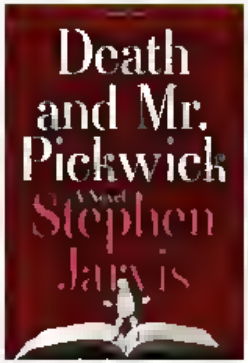
- A secondary reason was that Seymour's opening picture, *Mr Pickwick Addresses the Club*, with the club members gathered around a table, is evocative of the Last Supper of Christ, with Mr Pickwick's enemy, Mr Blotton, appearing in the role of Judas.
- However, the sum demanded for the use of just five words by Lady Gaga's managers was impossible to afford, and so her song had to be dropped.



- Bob Dylan, by contrast, was wonderfully generous - he gave me gratis use of a line from his song *Not Dork Yet*. But then, Dylan had once read from *The Pickwick Popers* in the Christmas edition of his radio show, and so perhaps he is a fan of the book.

- So, I needed to find a replacement for Lady Gaga's song. The solution came in the form of Queen's *Show Must Go On*. Its lyrics, as Peter Stadlera has written about in one of his posts, perfectly evoke the "sad clown" motif of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, and Freddie Mercury as a gay man, represents another motif of the novel.
- But what about asking Queen for permission to use the song? Well, here one can take advantage of another part of the law. Song titles are not subject to copyright. So, by merely quoting the song's title, I did not have to ask for Queen's permission, nor pay a fee. The lyrics for the song will therefore have to be imagined in readers heads, without my quoting them.
- And, at the end of the day, I am glad that I had to drop Lady Gaga. The Queen song is a much, much more potent indicator of the novel's themes

September 9



Death And Mr. Pickwick (Stephen Jarvis)

The novel [illegible] The Pickwick Papers was [illegible] under the pseudonym Bo. He took [illegible] The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club" after the death of illustrator Robert Seymour. Seymour's widow alleged that the idea for The Pickwick Papers was the intellectual property of Seymour. This is an idea that Dickens vigorously denied. In the novel **"Death and Mr. Pickwick,"** writer Stephen Jarvis asserts that the known history of The Pickwick Papers are false. Jarvis presents an alternative true account of the history of Mr. Pickwick and his many adventures.

Jarvis' writing is more accessible than that of Dickens. The novel is presented in a modern style that is highly influenced by English literature. The majority of tales weaved so skillfully together by Jarvis appear as a tale within a tale as told by Pickwick or an associate. The characters and their environs are delightfully Dickensian and reminiscent of a London captured in The Threepenny Opera or "Sweeney Todd." A world in the style. This novel is long. Jarvis covers a great history of Mr. Pickwick's adventures. It is well written but plumbing the depths of the novel equal as more than an afternoon's study.

- Another review:
- https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=877363879018870&set=a.786898821398710.1073741826.100002357979299&type=3&theater

September 9

Mr Pickwick finds literary home - Times Argus Online

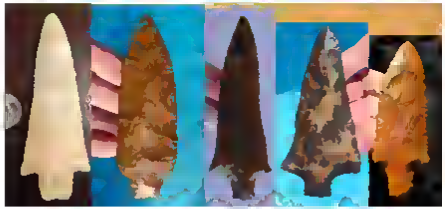
Times Argus Online Vermont news Vermont election results Barre News Montpelier News Central Vermont News local news Vermont government, Vermont sports Vermont classifieds Jobs in Vermont

- Michael Segers has just posted about this new statue of Mr Pickwick, which does not look like Seymour's character at all. I did in fact hear about this statue, and sent an email to the library, but I have heard nothing back from them so far.
- http://www.timesargus.com/article/20150901/NEWS01/709019896

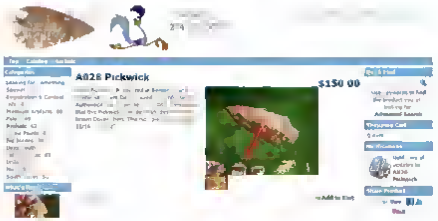
September 9

- Here's Michael Segers on why you should read *Death and Mr Pickwick*:
- "Now read the book, or I shall turn loose my attack parrot on you..."

September 9



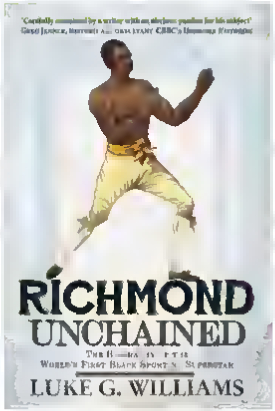
- A video, which Frank Bouchier-Hayes has just posted, is SOOO good that I wanted to find some tenuous reason for posting it on the *Death and Mr Pickwick* timeline. The tenuous reason goes like this. There is a primitive flint arrowhead known as a Pickwick point, because it was originally found in Pickwick Basin. You can read about Pickwick points here:
- http://www.projectilepoints.net/Points/Pickwick.html



- Now it so happens that you can buy Pickwick points from this vendor:
- http://roadrunnerartifacts.com/shop/product_info.php?products_id=487
- And the fact that business is called Roadrunner Artifacts is exactly the sort of tenuous connection I need!

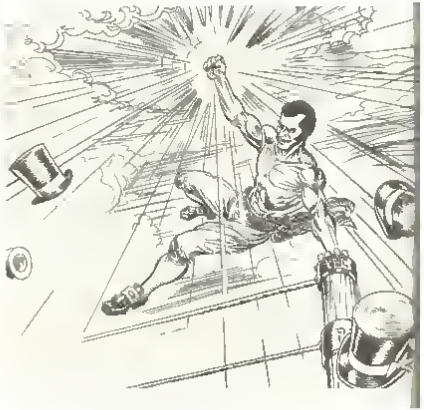
- So here it is...
- https://www.facebook.com/george.murphy/videos/vb.566514156/10150348007069157/?type=2&theatre
- The Road Runner episode we've waited twenty years to see!
- And Frank has indeed just found a 'bonus reason' for posting the vid here. This is what Frank says: 'Just looked at the lyrics to the cartoon theme song, one line of which reads 'That coyote is really a crazy clown'. It made me think of the dying clown image and story in *The Pickwick Papers* drawn by Seymour. It also made me think of the dying clown in *Death and Mr Pickwick*.' Here are the lyrics in full:
- http://www.lyricsondemand.com/tvthemes/roadrunnerlyrics.html

September 10



- I have just finished the new book *Richmond Unchained*, by Luke G. Williams – and it is wonderful. I like books which have a sense of 'importance' to them. I like to feel that I am reading about something that truly matters – and that certainly applies in the case of *Richmond Unchained*. This book should be made into a movie.

- The book is subtitled "The Biography of the World's First Black Sporting Superstar", and it tells the story of Bill Richmond, an American slave, who rose to great prominence as a boxer in Georgian England. For fans of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, it offers a tremendous experience of the world associated with Pierce Egan, and indeed quotes from Egan appear throughout the text. In particular, I loved the way it mentioned characters who appear in the Daffy Club scene of *Death and Mr Pickwick* – here are Bob Gregson, the former landlord at the Castle Tavern, and Tom Belcher, who is introduced to Seymour (Indeed, there is even a mention of Trusty the fighting terrier, who is in one of the portraits on display at the Club...)



- The tremendous sense of importance which I feel about this book truly came home in the section dealing with the famous Molineaux Cribb fight when Tom Molineaux, a black American, was matched against Tom Cribb, the English Champion. Bill Richmond was ringside, as Molineaux's trainer/manager. The fight has a good claim to be considered the first international sporting event of significance, long before there were international matches in football, rugby and cricket. That in itself would make the fight important - but added to that, there is the whole matter of race in England, which runs alongside this fight, and is a recurring issue in the book as a whole

- And for *Death and Mr Pickwick* fans, another tremendous scene concerns the first fight organised by the Pugilistic Club, whose blazers, with "PC" on the buttons, almost certainly inspired the Pickwick Club's blazer. Richmond won that fight, and shown here is the book's illustration of Richmond's victory. (I love the book's illustrations, drawn by Trevor Von Eeden, which have the feel of a superhero comic book.) The place where that fight happened, at Coombe Warren, Kingston upon Thames, is a place I now want to visit, on one of my *Death and Mr Pickwick* excursions

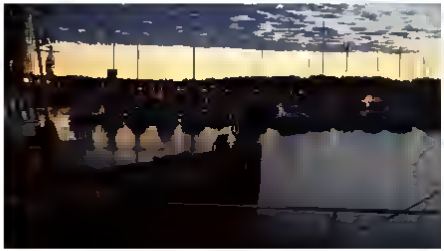
Bill Richmond: The black boxer wowed the court of George IV and taught Lord Byron to spar

327

- And here is an article, by Luke, which appeared in *The Independent*, the day after a plaque honouring Richmond was unveiled in the Tom Cribb pub in Panton Street. London - another place I definitely want to visit:
- http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/history/bill-richmond-the-black-boxer-wowed-the-court-of-george-iv-and-taught-lord-byron-to-spar-10473577.html
- Luke is an excellent writer and researcher, and I strongly recommend this book. Indeed, if *Richmond Unchained* had been published when I was writing *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I am sure it would have influenced my manuscript.

September 10

- Continuing Peter Stadlera's Pickwickian tour...
- "In the late afternoon we arrived at Rochester (for many years Dickens's favourite town) and stayed at the Ship & Trades Hotel outside the old town by the river. Next morning we headed for Rochester High Street, a road were Charles Dickens is present on nearly every building. The names of many allude to his works. We started with the famous Elizabethan Eastgate House mentioned in the *Pickwick Papers* as Westgate in 1836 and as Nun's House in *Edwin Drood* in 1870. At the moment the house is under renovation though.



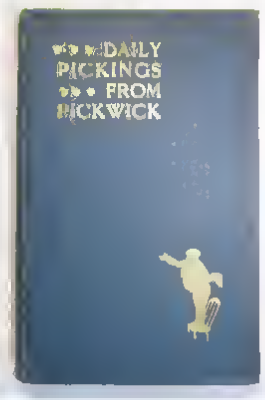
Two Cities
Francis Tea

87
Sweet Temptations

CITY OF ROCHESTER
EASTGATE HOUSE
BUILT BY THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL
SIR PETER BUCK 1590-1
WESTGATE HOUSE
THE NUN'S HOUSE

- "Tomorrow you can follow our stroll down the street to more *Pickwick*-related buildings..."

September 11



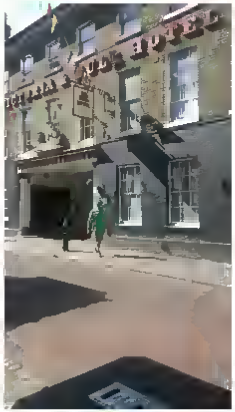
- I recently purchased an unusual piece of Pickwickiana - a book called *Daily Pickings from Pickwick*, by Florence Dalgleish. Published in 1904, this book provides a quote from *Pickwick* for every day of the year. The peculiar thing is, though, that many of the daily pieces are not particularly "quoteworthy", in the sense of being a self-contained piece of wisdom or wit, which enriches the day. The book is essentially a precis of the entire *Pickwick Papers* - and is really only understandable in the context of a society which knows *Pickwick* SO well that the mere mention of a few lines from the book will conjure up an entire scene.

- So, for instance, the picking for September 9th is:
- "Samuel Weller?" said Mr Jackson, inquiringly.
  "Vun o' the truest things as you've said for many a long year,' replied Sam in a most composed manner.
- A person who *Pickwick* knew very well would remember that Jackson had been sent by Dodson and Fogg, but otherwise the quote would be mysterious. September 10th continues the precis:
- "Here's a subpoena for you, Mr Weller,' said Jackson.
  "What's that in English?" inquired Sam.
  "Here's the original,' said Jackson, declining the required explanation.
- And that's it. Today's picking continues the exchange between Sam and Jackson:
- "Oh that's the 'riginal, is it?" said Sam. "Well, I'm wery glad I've seen the 'riginal, 'cos it's a gratifyin sort o' thing and eases vun's mind so much."
- Perhaps the motivation for the book's existence is that it keeps *Pickwick* in the memory. After a while, even the most beloved books start to fade in one's mind, and *Daily Pickings* will slow or prevent that in the case of *The Pickwick Papers*.

September 11

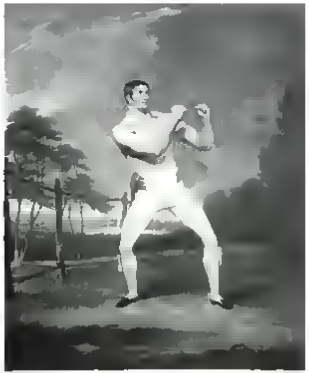
- Peter Stadlera's Pickwickian odyssey continues. Here are three more photos he took in Rochester.

CHARLES DICKENS
1812
1870


HOTEL

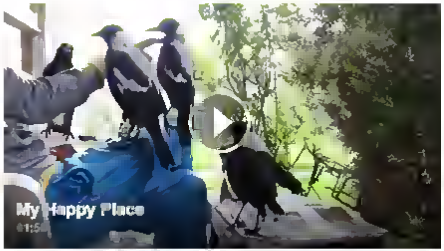
September 11

- David Snowdon, the award-winning author of *Writing the Prizefight: Pierce Egon's Boxiono World*, has just sent me this picture of Bob Gregson - landlord of the Castle Tavern, Holborn until 1814, who had been 'unanimously voted [...] to the honourable situation of poet-laureate to the Prize Ring' (Pierce Egan *'Book of Sports'* (1832). Gregson is mentioned in both *Deoth ond Mr Pickwick*, and in Luke G. Williams's new book, *Richmond Unchoined*.



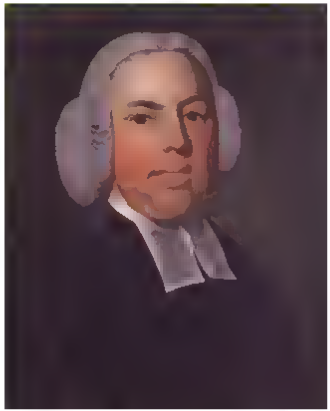
- David has also sent me this picture of Tom Belcher who, like Gregson, turns up in both *Death and Mr Pickwick* and *Richmond Unchained*. David writes: 'Tom Belcher took over the Castle Tavern in 1814. Charles Molloy Westmacott (1788–1868), writing as Bernard Blackmantle', articulated Egan's precarious tenure in a fascinating little cameo that accompanied a scene set in the Castle Tavern, which, at this time (1825), was under the stewardship of Tom Belcher.
'You will perceive the immortal typo, the all accomplished Pierce Egan, an eccentric in his way, both in manner and person, but not deficient in that peculiar species of wit which fits him for the high office of historian of the ring. The ironical praise of Blackwood he has the good sense to turn to a right account, laughs at their satire, and pretends to believe it is all meant in right-down earnest approbation of his extraordinary merits [...] Pierce kept undisturbed possession of the throne, but recently competitors have shown themselves in the field well found in all particulars, and carrying such witty and weighty ammunition wherewithal, that they more than threaten "to push the hero from his stool"...' [Featured in David Snowdon, *Writing the Prizefight: Pierce Egan's Boxiana World* (2013)]

September 11



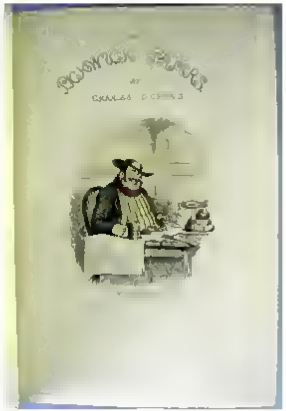
- Michael Segers has just posted this video
- https://www.facebook.com/themagpiewhisperer/videos/vb.717569965003825/762406743853480/?type=2&theater
- As many of you will know, a magpie appears at the start of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, and curses the Seymour family when Robert Seymour's father does not raise his hat in tribute to the bird, thereby violating a local superstition. Although the magpie only appears once in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, much later the curse runs its full course when a hat stays on a head ...
- The magpie struck me as a very good symbol to use in the book, and not only because of the superstition. Its Latin name, Pica, sounds like a herald of *Pickwick*. The bird is also known for its voracious appetite, and so fits in perfectly with all the eating in the book. (Indeed, Pica is the name for an eating disorder, in which people eat earth and other inedible substances.) The magpie is also associated with theft, and even its black and white livery is suggestive of the dominant colours of the etchings that Seymour did for *Pickwick*

September 12

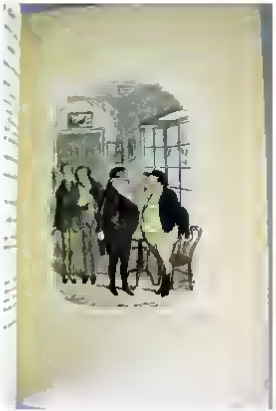


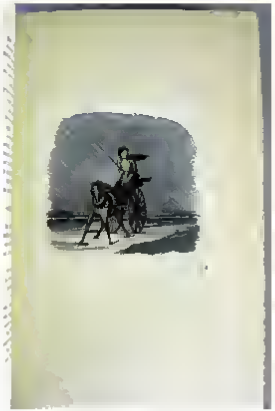
- In 1769, James Granger, a clergyman and print collector, published *A Biographical History of England*, which had a unique selling point: it contained blank pages, so that people could paste in pictures of the historical characters mentioned in the text. This led to the hobby of "Grangerising", or extra-illustrating books, in which additional pictures were bound into a volume. Indeed, the hobby is alluded to in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, in a passing reference to the bookseller Charles Tilt, whose windows "always had displays of pictures to be bound into Scott's novels."
- There is no doubt that extra-illustrating was one of the forces that led to the rise of the illustrated novel in nineteenth-century England, with *The Pickwick Papers* of course being a great example - for if people were prepared to bind pictures into novels, why not sell them novels which were ALREADY illustrated?

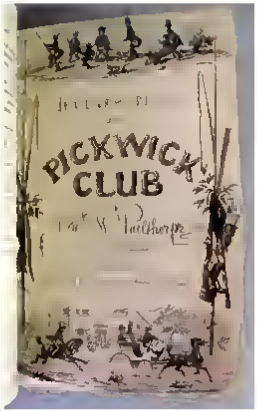
- But even though *Pickwick* was published as an already-illustrated novel, this did not stop people wanting even MORE illustrations to accompany the text. This was connected to the very nature of *Pickwick*: the novel's strong associations with real places meant that one could bind in maps and pictures of pubs and local scenery. Also, many historical figures were mentioned in *Pickwick*, such as Richard III, and so one could insert a picture of the crookback king at the appropriate point.



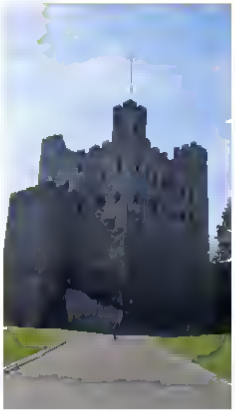
- There were also artists who drew new pictures to extra-illustrate *Pickwick*, showing the many scenes which were not tackled by Seymour, Buss and Phiz, and which could then be bound into the book. You'll see here examples of extra-illustrations for *Pickwick*. There were also published editions of *Pickwick* which copied the practices of extra-illustrating - including the six-volume Autograph Variorum edition shown at the end of this post, which included HUNDREDS of Pickwickian pictures.
- The hobby of Grangerising, though, had its controversial side. Many of the pictures used for extra-illustrating were simply cut out of other books. Even today, secondhand booksellers bemoan the fact that so many volumes were ruined or rendered worthless by the passion for extra-illustration.





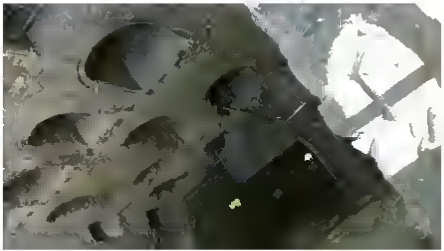

PICKWICK
CLUB

September 12



- Peter Stadlera continues his Pickwickian expedition...
- "Today we visit the fascinating ruin of Rochester Castle. The 12th-century keep or stone tower, which is the castle's most prominent feature, is one of the best preserved in England or France and one of the best preserved I know or have ever been into. Charles Dickens lived in Rochester and included the castle ruins in *The Pickwick Papers* and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Through the words of one of his characters, Dickens described the castle as a 'glorious pile - frowning wall - tottering arches - dark nooks - crumbling stones'.

INSIDE THE KEEP



- “Many of England's historic buildings, particularly ruins, have acquired myths and legends, and some are rumoured to be haunted. Rochester is no exception, and is reportedly haunted by a white lady. Dickens is also said to haunt the moat on Christmas Eve. But let's enjoy these storybook-like ruins on a bright sunny day...”

September 12

Creepy Relics of Phrenology, the Pseudoscience of Reading Head Bumps

These creepy miniature heads — 69 in all — are a fascinating relic of a short-lived fad in the 18th century called phrenology. They're currently housed at the

GIZMODO.COM | BY JENNIFER OUELLETTE

- Peter Stadlera has also just posted this piece about the pseudoscience of phrenology, which gets several mentions in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, including in the scene when Dickens is in the Cider Cellars - I mention a group of unsavoury-looking characters "who, on any phrenological assessment, could have formed a criminal gang."
- http://gizmodo.com/creepy-miniature-heads-think-they-know-your-personality-1729956884

September 13

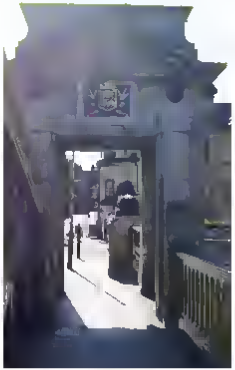
Death and Mr Pickwick: The Sailor in the Mausoleum

The story that completes The Pickwick Papers

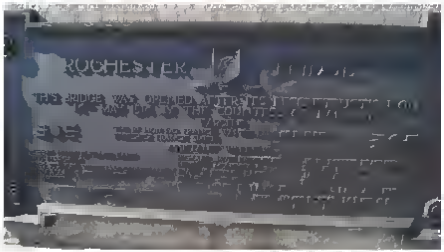
OUTUBE.COM

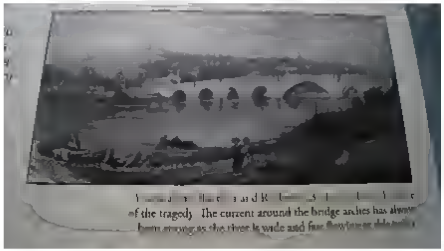
- To celebrate the Canadian publication of *Death and Mr Pickwick* on September 22, I have made a new *Death and Mr Pickwick* video
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIpboxK3JV8
- in which I read aloud the last of the inset stories in the book, accompanied by pictures. (This is the sixth video, and you'll find them all in the folder;
- https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKD45EJx008-bE0YRToewjg)
- As many of you will know, *The Pickwick Papers* has a piece of "unfinished business" - the character who told the story of the dying clown promised a second story, which was never told. I saw it as part of my mission to write that tale, and so "complete" *The Pickwick Papers*, after over 175 years. So here it is.

September 13

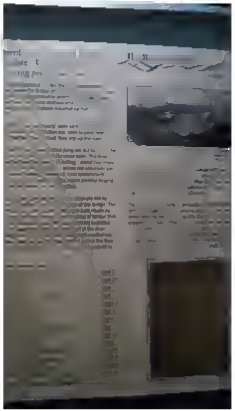


- I have just posted the new *Death and Mr Pickwick* video in which the Pickwickian character Dismal Jemmy appears...and amazingly Peter Stadlera mentions Jemmy in the latest post of his Pickwickian tour.
- "Mr. Pickwick rises early and walks to Rochester Bridge, where he meets "Dismal Jemmy" contemplating suicide, or so he says. To give you an impression of Rochester Bridge we also rose early and had a look around.


ROCHESTER

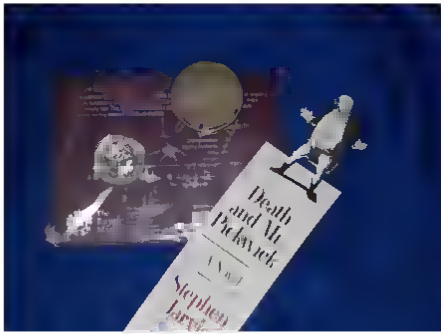


- "We didn't meet Jemmy but heard about another unforgotten tragedy under the city's medieval bridge. On Friday, 13 September 1816 a boat struck the timber (placed there by workers for a repair job on the bridge) at speed and all its 15 occupants were tipped into the current. Only the boatman's dog succeeded in swimming to the shore.



September 14

- A coin has inspired today's post - because my wife Elaine has just received the splendid commemorative coin which marks the Queen becoming the UK's longest-reigning monarch, beating the previous record, held by Queen Victoria. The coin is shown here along with a Victorian coin which Elaine happened to have.



- Victoria's reign started during the serial run of *The Pickwick Papers*, and in *Death and Mr Pickwick* the dawning of the new Victorian age is marked by...

- ...the tolling of the Great Bell of St Paul's Cathedral.

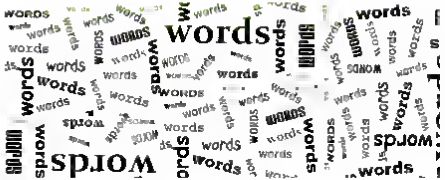
- But Victoria had been mentioned in the novel prior to this, in the scene in which Lord Wynford, shown left, is plotting against the Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne.

- An unpleasant cartoon by Seymour is mentioned in that scene, in which Wynford - a keen enthusiast for capital punishment - is shown hanging a cat.

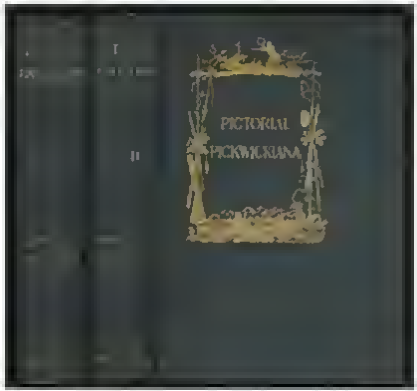
- Seymour's personal views on the monarchy are unknown, but no cartoonist would ever show deference, professionally, to the monarch. You'll see here a Seymour cartoon which shows Victoria's predecessor, William IV, being used as a mouthpiece by his ministers: the subject-matter for the King's speech is crammed in at the monarch's ears, while the royal mouth is sewn up, by certain parties who do not wish it to be opened too wide.

- And here is a cartoon in which Seymour portrays the King as a monster from Hanover, who supported measures to suppress the freedom of the press, thereby delivering a death-sting to liberty. Cartoons like these made the magazine in which they appeared, *Figoro in London*, one of the most successful publications of the day.

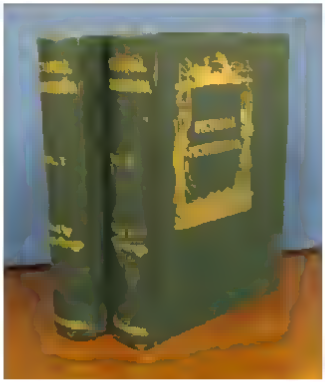
September 14



- This is my second post today, and I have accompanied it with the graphic showing a profusion of words, because I want to apologise for its length. I have just discovered that another statement about *Death and Mr Pickwick* has appeared on the Dickensblog website, and I think it needed an immediate response. I have posted one on the blog, but as it is moderated, it has not appeared yet. However here is the statement by John K, followed by my reply.

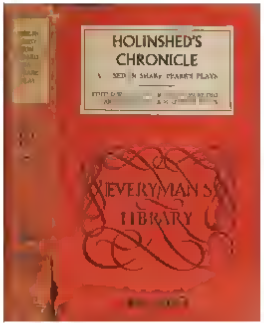


- John K:
- "I ought to say that I am a member of the Dickens Fellowship (London Central - though I have never been to a meeting) and am not of the view that Dickens was some kind of saint - far from it.
- I did enjoy reading *Death and Mr Pickwick* in so far as the era was evoked in great detail. I also enjoyed the information about publishing, Seymour's background, and the stories of so many diverse people, some of whom were previously just names to me.
- I note that the central ground Jarvis covers has been covered before, albeit nowhere near as exhaustively. For example, in Joseph Grego's *Pictorial Pickwickiana - Charles Dickens and his illustrators*(1899),



- "Grego discussed some of the core issues that Jarvis raises. Grego says, for example, that Seymour had drawn prototypes of Pickwick-like characters, and that Seymour's last design goes further into the progress of Pickwick than the author (Dickens) himself has mentioned. Grego concludes that 'it must be conceded that Seymour had practically originated the scheme of the Pickwick Club.' (Incidentally, Grego's book includes facsimiles of all of Seymour's surviving *Pickwick* sketches that the Seymour family sold to Augustin Daly in 1889. Jarvis' book would have benefitted from these)...

- I believe there is something to Joseph Grego's comment that 'Seymour was responsible for the familiar outward man but Dickens quickened these externals with vital characteristics which endeared Pickwick to myriads of readers'. Pickwick's evolving personality, and the situations he found himself in, was created by Dickens over nineteen long months, and through his nearly three hundred thousand words. Dickens clearly made much of the story and characterisation up as he went along, and this is self evident from the way Dickens worked, producing monthly parts, on the hoof, without number plans (mems) at this early stage of his career.



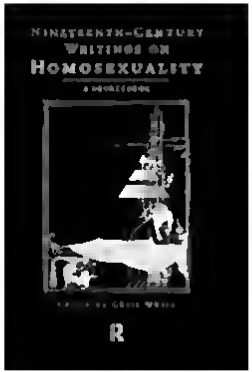
- "At the heart of Stephen Jarvis's novel is the concept of plagiarism. At one point, Jarvis touches on Shakespeare using Geoffrey of Monmouth as a source, but a character states 'it is one thing to select a dead chronicler as one's source, and quite another to write up a living man's ideas'. An odd statement given that Seymour was dead before the bulk of *Pickwick* had been written.
Jarvis fails to mention that one of Shakespeare's most often used sources was Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* (published in 1577 and 1587), and that Shakespeare 'borrowed' more than the plot from Holinshed - he sometimes used Holinshed's actual words straight out of the *Chronicles*. That is a far more direct case of plagiarism than we may have here (where, at best, Pickwick's entire character and behaviour through nearly three hundred thousand words was supposedly 'stolen' from a handful of illustrations and a meeting).

- "Aside from Mr Inbelicate's failure to be objective where Dickens is concerned, as set out in Gina's review, I also note the attempt to dehumanize Dickens. For example, Mr Inbelicate imagines that Dickens reacts to hearing about Seymour's death not by being sad or shocked, but by thinking of Seymour being hacked to pieces by a butcher and made into sausages. That says more to me about Mr Inbelicate/Jarvis than it does about Dickens.
- Turning to Mrs Seymour, I can understand her frustration and sense of injustice as she struggled in poverty whilst her husband's project catapulted Dickens and his publishers to enormous success and rewards. However, as Mrs Seymour published lies about Dickens (which Jarvis accepts), why should we believe her statement - as Jarvis readily does - that Dickens met Seymour twice, not the once that Dickens claims?

- "Nowhere does Jarvis s 802 page book mention the Seymour family s public statement, nearly two decades after Seymour s suicide and the inquest into it (so hardly likely to affect their inheritance by a felo de se finding by that time) that it is not our wish to connect that event [Seymour s suicide] in an invidious manner with the Pickwick vexation (page 40, Grego) The Seymour family instead blame overwork for the suicide

- Regarding Seymour s homosexuality, I can hardly believe that Jarvis drops this bombshell in his novel and then totally fails to contextualise it or consider the effect this may have had on Seymour s mental well being if it was true Up until 1861, sodomy was punishable by death Between 1806 - 1861, 8,921 men had been prosecuted for sodomy, with 404 sentenced to death and 56 executed

- "On 27 November 1835, five months before Seymour's suicide, James Pratt and John Smith were publicly executed for the crime of sodomy. James Pratt had a wife and children and although a number of witnesses came forward to testify to his good character, the Judge did not exercise his power to commute the sentence to imprisonment
- On 5 November 1835, Dickens visited Newgate Prison and wrote a powerful account of this in *A Visit to Newgate*, published in *Sketches By Boz*. Dickens sympathetically described seeing James Pratt and John Smith in their cell, without mentioning their names or crime in his piece. Dickens tone here is a far cry from the rather distasteful and derogatory thought that Jarvis puts in Dickens' head about Seymour's homosexuality (Boz thought of Seymour. He knew what Seymour had been - the look of the artist screamed sod(omite) pg 590)

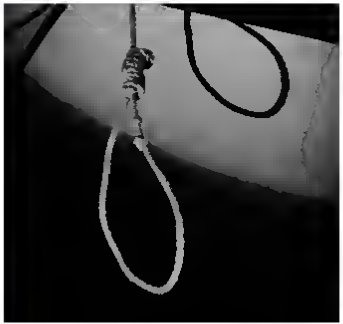


- "I cannot begin to consider how awful it must have been for a 'married homosexual living a double life in Victorian times, with the very real threat of blackmail, arrest, ostracisation, vilification, the pillory, imprisonment and execution
- I understand that Seymour was a melancholic and sensitive man, prone to depression, mental breakdown and with 3 attempted suicide attempts behind him before he sadly succeeded in 1836. I can well believe that if he was homosexual, the resulting intolerable stress of being so at that time, may well have been one of the central factors in his mental decline. This would make sense of his suicide note refusing to blame anyone, and his familes insistence years after the event, that the *Pickwick* matter had nothing to do with his death. Perhaps Seymour was being threatened or blackmailed? Certainly he was in no financial difficulties, had an abundance of work, and had seemingly good relations with his wife and family. In the final analysis, I don't think we will ever know what actually happened and why. But given Seymour's history, Jarvis version of events, laying the blame for Seymour's suicide on the *Pickwick* 'vexation' and at Dickens' hands, is highly unlikely
- Regards, John.
  Posted by: John K | September 05, 2015 at 10:04 PM

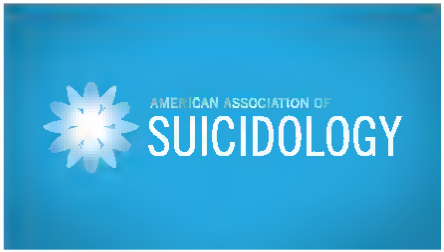
- My reply:
- Although I have been advised that an author should not respond to reviews, there are many points in John K's statement which need a response. Let's take the points in turn.
- 1) John refers to my mentioning only Geoffrey of Monmouth and not Holinshed. There are very good reasons why I mention Geoffrey – he was the originator of the Bladud legend, which is featured in both *Death and Mr Pickwick* and *The Pickwick Papers*, and I wanted little allusions to Bladud to recur in the book. (Bladud was also the father of King Lear, and that is why there are several Lear references.)
- 2) The "living man" obviously refers to the fact that Seymour WAS alive when Dickens was working with him, and in that scene Forster makes it clear that even if only ten per cent of *Pickwick* was originated by Seymour, that is the ten per cent that bothers him. However, Seymour's influence continued after his death, and so the ten per cent is an underestimate.

- 3) Regarding Dickens imagining Seymour being turned into sausages: the fact is that later in *The Pickwick Papers* Dickens DOES imagine a man committing suicide, and being turned into sausages, and what's more there is even a reference to the man's "temporary insanity". This is not just an idle phrase – "temporary insanity' was the very judgment which was reached by the inquest into Seymour's death. I find it difficult to believe that Dickens used that phrase without thinking of Seymour, and therefore it is entirely plausible that Dickens had the disturbing fantasy of Seymour being turned into sausages
- 4) I don't "readily accept" Mrs Seymour's statement that Dickens and Seymour met more than once. Later in the book I give good reasons for believing that Seymour and Dickens had two meetings. What's more, the only lie that Mrs Seymour published was in connection with the dying clown – the available evidence vindicates the rest of her statement. And even this lie occurred after Dickens had published hers, so there may be an element of tit for tat here.

- 5) It was absolutely crucial to avoid a felo de se verdict, because otherwise Mrs Seymour and her children would have been reduced to instant destitution, so temporary insanity via overwork was the verdict that HAD to be reached at the inquest. Once that verdict had been obtained, the Seymour family would be likely to stick to the story - to do otherwise would be to imply be that witnesses committed perjury at the inquest, which would be a very serious matter even after the passage of time.



- 6) Regarding Seymour's homosexuality. I DO bring in the mental stresses that this would cause, when Seymour thinks about the carnal acts he had committed with men, and I also mention the fact it was a capital offence. At the same time, Seymour's public use of the 'Shortshanks' pseudonym, which had homosexual associations, suggests that he took on board the risks associated with gay behaviour, and was even prepared to "advertise" his gayness, and so I don't think one can over emphasise homosexuality as a cause of mental stress in him. There is no evidence at all that he was being blackmailed or threatened. And yes, I knew about Pratt and Smith, and their mention in one of Dickens's sketches, and that Dickens takes a fairly sympathetic line to them. Indeed, there seem to be homosexual allusions in *Pickwick*, not only in the relationship between Mr Pickwick and Sam Weller, but also in the relationship between Ben Allen and Bob Sawyer, which suggest that Dickens was rather liberal in his views. But I don't see this liberal attitude to be at all incompatible with Dickens thinking that something about Seymour "screamed sod. "We often use private language which is "naughtier" than the things we say in public



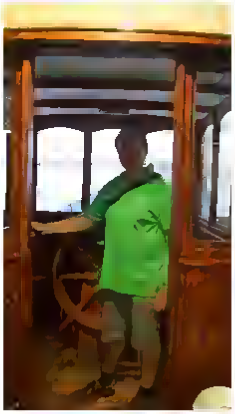
- 7) Above all, John K's statement totally fails to point out that the most extensive academic analysis of Seymour's suicide, by the suicidologist Fred Cutter, DOES put the blame on the "Pickwick vexation." Cutter concluded that Seymour had a long-term "willingness to die", but that this willingness was low level. Something happened immediately prior to the death to make that willingness soar. (Some of Cutter's arguments are incorporated in the section of *Death and Mr Pickwick* which deal with Seymour's son.) The obvious candidate for this "something" was the second meeting with Dickens. Various things may have contributed to Seymour's long-term willingness to die, including stresses about homosexuality, but it would be utterly perverse to ignore that meeting with Dickens when analysing the suicide – a meeting from which Seymour returned as an emotional wreck. Furthermore, after that meeting, Seymour burnt his papers and correspondence dealing with *Pickwick*. Note that – his papers and correspondence concerning *PICKWICK* – not his papers overall. Something happened at that meeting to convert a pet idea – a thing that had deep personal significance to Seymour – into something that disgusted him.

- 8) Let me that stress that I am not saying that Seymour came up with everything connected with *Pickwick* - that would be absurd. The point is that Dickens, Forster and Chapman lied through their teeth about Seymour, and that Seymour did much more than Dickens claimed.
- I am happy to discuss any aspect of *Death and Mr Pickwick* with anyone, including with Gina, so if you have any questions or points you wish to make, do get in touch with me.
- Best wishes
- Stephen Jarvis

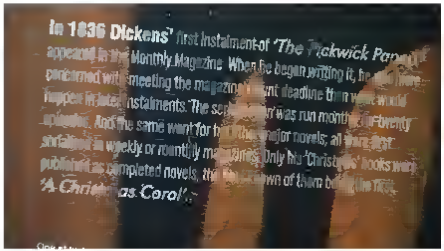
September 15

- The two people shown here are Dickens's brother Frederick and his estranged wife Catherine. As readers of *Death and Mr Pickwick* will know these two were present at the fateful meeting between Seymour and Dickens, from which Seymour returned in a state of extreme emotional distress. However, it is also the case that, many years after the meeting, Dickens wrote to his son, asking him to get "witness statements" from Frederick and Catherine, about that meeting. Dickens was clearly rattled by the rumours about Seymour that had been circulating, and wanted to bolster his own position: in that letter, Dickens even spoke about his fears that one day, perhaps after his death, the Seymour affair could return to haunt the family. But here is the thing: to the best of my knowledge, no evidence has ever turned up that Catherine and Frederick provided witness statements in response to that plea. Now of course, the passage of time erodes lots of evidence: one never gets the evidence one wants, but rather the evidence that history leaves behind. But given the importance that Dickens would have attached to the statements, and his stated view that the future of the Dickens family could be threatened unless something was done about the Seymour affair, one would expect any witness statements by Frederick and Catherine to be very carefully protected.
- The fact that there is no evidence of a reply from Catherine and Frederick leads me to suspect that the two were simply not prepared to sign up to Dickens's lies.
-

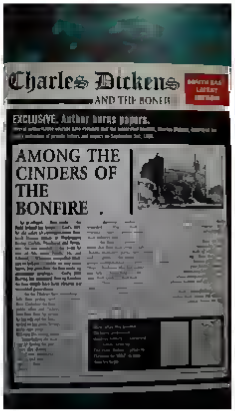
September 15



- Here is Peter Stadlera's latest Pickwickian post. This one refers to the gigantic bonfire of correspondence that Dickens carried out - the obvious behaviour a man who is trying to manipulate public perception of his personal history.


In 1836 Dickens' first instalment of 'The Pickwick Papers'
appeared in the Monthly Magazine. When he began writing it, he
performed with meeting the magazine
happen in later instalments. The sc
unfolding. And the same went for h
instalment in weekly or monthly m
published as completed novels, a
'A Christ as Carol'.

- "In today's post I want to navigate you through Guildhall. The author's life, times and work can be explored at the Dickens' Discovery Rooms in the Guildhall Museum.


Charles Dickens
AND THE BONFIRE
EXCLUSIVE. Author burns papers.
AMONG THE CINDERS OF THE BONFIRE .

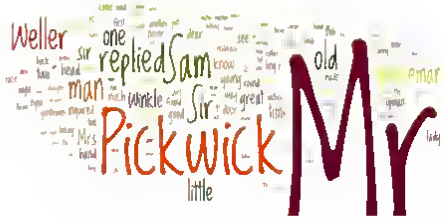
- "Dickens burnt papers at Gad's Hill Place.

Gad's Hill Place where Dickens destroyed his private correspondence

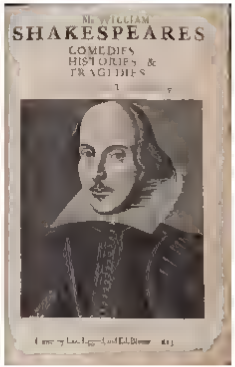
- “Dickens and some ladies in his life...

- "Here is a miniature portrait of Dickens, his pocket bible and a drinking glass he used in the Falstaff Inn, Higham.

September 16



- I have posted another graphic today which shows a lot of words, because I have just responded to another lengthy post on the Dickensblog site with a lengthy response of my own. This post - another by John - is very important, because it shows that AT LAST people are looking properly into Seymour. And John, it turns out, is far better informed that I had thought. So, here is John's post, broken down into its separate points, followed by my replies to those points.



- John: I note Jarvis's explanation about why he mentioned Geoffrey of Monmouth instead of Holinshed, but he completely misses my point, which is that Jarvis goes to great lengths to intricately set out Dickens' supposed 'plagiarism', but he excuses Shakespeare's stealing both plot and actual text from Holinshed in one short sentence. This stark difference in treatment reflects the anti-Dickens bias that runs through his book

- SJ: I have never, ever accused Dickens of plagiarism in the sense that Shakespeare plagiarised Holinshed. The essence of my claim – as I clearly state at the end of my previous contribution – is that Dickens lied about Seymour's contribution, and that Seymour did far more than Dickens claimed. It is in that sense that Dickens is passing off Seymour's ideas as his own. There is no anti-Dickens bias here. However, there is a history to this part of *Death and Mr Pickwick* which is perhaps worth mentioning – it arose from a conversation with the late Dr David Parker, who was then embarking on the detailed line-by-line analysis of *Pickwick*, and he had himself discovered a number of lies by Dickens in *Pickwick*'s prefaces.

- John Dickens may have had the disturbing fantasy of Seymour being turned into sausages that Jarvis describes, I don't know, but my point was that he places that thought in Dickens' head at the moment where Dickens finds out about Seymour's suicide. There is no room in Jarvis's world for Dickens to feel any sorrow, anxiety or compassion upon hearing of Seymour's death, which is why I still believe Jarvis dehumanises him
- SJ: It is not true that I place that thought in Dickens's head at the moment that he hears about Seymour's death, it is part of a sequence. But that is a minor point. The main point is that it is not dehumanising at all to suggest that Dickens's mind may have gone in unusual directions. And the cannibalistic tendencies of the conversion-to-sausages idea are obviously related to a crucial part of Dickens's past: the gruesome stories which his nurse Mary Weller told him, which included people being turned into food.

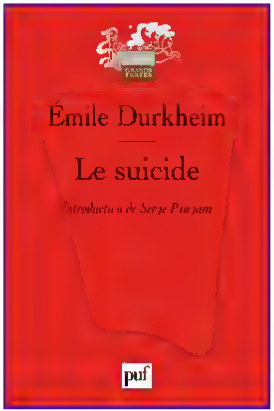
- John: Mrs Seymour did in fact say quite a few lies about Dickens, for example, that he was hired out of pity, and she even made the bizarre accusation that someone else was responsible for his works – a Mr Morris! Jane R Cohen, in her book *Dickens and his original Illustrators* (which Jarvis considers an extremely important work of scholarship) states that Mrs Seymour's statement was on the whole a gross distortion of fact.

- SJ: Yes, I do consider Jane Cohen's book an extremely important work of scholarship, and it remains so, for getting to grips with all the illustrators who worked with Dickens. But I have also come to realise that Cohen was wrong on Seymour. You can see all the things she missed: the contradictions in Dickens's account, the John Foster fraud and so on. But regarding Mrs Seymour in particular: I make it perfectly clear in *Death and Mr Pickwick* that she was prone to exaggeration. This could take various forms, including passing on hearsay about "Mr Morris", or distorting the circumstances under which Dickens was employed. But there is nothing comparable to the whopping lies that Dickens, Forster and Chapman concocted about the origins of *Pickwick*. And even the exaggerations of Mrs Seymour are not so bad when you consider the circumstances of what she knew. (Continued on next page)

- It was the case that Dickens was paid nothing for his early stories, and so one can understand how Mrs Seymour could believe he was taken on as a matter of pity, or that his early works were unsaleable. You can understand too that she could believe that people flocked to *Pickwick* because of her husband, because Dickens himself had tried to "talk up" the early success of *Pickwick* in one of the inserted notices in the early issues. And her lie about the dying clown does not materially affect the dispute over the origin of *Pickwick*, because she admits that this tale was imposed by Dickens. What IS interesting, however, is a supplementary piece of information which the Seymour family gave about the dying clown: that there was an earlier version of *The Stroller's Tale*, in which the main character was a writer, not a clown. That DOES materially affect the origin of *The Pickwick Papers*. And one can indeed find in Seymour's works things which make this entirely plausible, as I show in *Death and Mr Pickwick*.

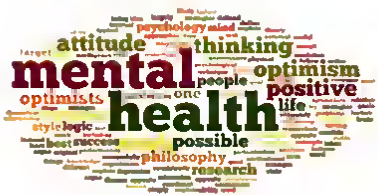
- John: I find it really sad that Jarvis admits that he is aware that Dickens took a 'fairly sympathetic line' to Pratt and Smith when he saw them in Newgate, but instead of reflecting that seeming compassion and understanding about homosexuality, he chooses instead to invent Dickens horribly derogatory thought about Seymour's homosexuality (Boz knew what Seymour had been - the look of the artist screamed sod).

- SJ: You may find it "sad" that I chose to have Dickens use the language about the "sod", but the point is I am writing a novel, not a political tract. Characters portrayed as saints rarely work in novels, and as I said in my previous reply, people frequently use "naughty" language in private. At one point I did indeed consider having Smith and Pratt as characters in the novel - the novel is very long as it is, but it could have been much longer, and I cut out many things in the final manuscript. (I might add - the lies of Dickens about *Pickwick*'s origins, as expressed in his prefaces to *Pickwick*, show that he is a man whose published works do not necessarily correspond to his private behaviour.)



- John: As I am about to comment on Fred Cutter's analysis of Seymour's suicide, I ought to provide a brief personal note. One of the primary disciplines involved with Suicidology is Sociology. My background is in Sociology, and my degree dissertation was about Durkheim's concept of 'anomie' in his famous study of suicide. Among other relevant posts I have had since leaving university (decades ago), I worked for five years on Medical Appeal Tribunals, where the tribunal regularly had to sift through conflicting medical evidence to determine the causes of mental and physical debility and the degree of disablement. This was a complex process, even with the appellant before us, and two medical experts (Consultants) questioning and examining the appellant.

- I am familiar with Fred Cutter's academic analysis of Seymour's suicide. I don't believe his conclusions are anywhere near as simplistic as Jarvis states. I note Cutter wrote his paper in 1971 some 135 years after Seymour's suicide. Thinking of my own experience in considering mental health cases, I cannot begin to think how difficult it would be to determine cause and effect in someone long dead, with all interested parties also dead, and no objective medical evidence whatsoever to consider. The restrictions seem almost insurmountable. (Continued on next slide.)



- Cutter admits he is impeded by the fact that 'psychological autopsies' are usually conducted with survivors whereas he had to rely on what he calls the 'biased' statements by Dickens, Mrs Seymour, Buss and A Beckett to reach his conclusions. Furthermore, Cutter accepts that the background biographical information on Seymour is 'meagre'. In the absence of details, there are many 'inferences' in the paper. Seymour's supposed homosexuality is not mentioned at all. There is scant information about the severity of Seymour's mental health, or how serious his 3 attempted suicides were (we do not even know exactly when the attempts were made, although inferences are made)

- I cannot see anywhere in Cutter's paper that Seymour's "willingness to die" was "low level" prior to Dickens involvement with him, as Jarvis claims. I do not believe that it would be appropriate to describe someone who had attempted suicide three times in such a way. There isn't anywhere near enough information about Seymour's mental health history for anyone to make informed conclusions about that issue one way or another (Continued on next slide.)

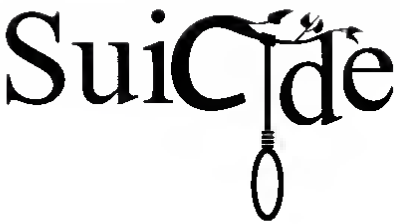
- Jarvis is right that Cutter's summary does say that Dickens was the 'final' precipitant of Seymour's self-injuries, but critically, Cutter also says in his summary, for example, that 'suicide is not caused by any one person', and that Mrs Seymour contributed to Seymour's 'self-injuries'.
- My over-riding view of Cutter's paper is that it is an opinion based on Cutter's expertise, and also on the extremely limited information available to him. Cutter himself says at the outset of the paper that the questions around Seymour's suicide 'are not easily answered', and, in his summary at the end, that his review 'approximates' an answer to the questions Seymour's suicide raises. Jarvis on the other hand regards Cutter's paper and his summary - so far as Dickens is concerned at the least - as irrefutable fact.

today is a good day to die

- SJ: Regarding Cutter. I am not being "simplistic" – however I am not going to give the whole of his argument on a blog. (I couldn't, even if I wanted to. I don't have a copy of the paper to hand, and it's a long time since I read it.) But there is a general principle here, which affects all historical research, not just research into historical suicides: you never get the evidence you want, but the evidence that history leaves behind, and evidence that reflects individual biases and prejudices. This doesn't mean that you throw up your hands and say that a problem is 'insurmountable'. Equally, I do not for one moment believe that Cutter's paper is "irrefutable fact". But clearly Cutter is working out his willingness to die calculations on the basis of the limited information that was available, and that is not a disreputable thing. As I recall, Cutter takes the Seymour picture "Better luck next time", which shows a failed suicide by hanging, and using a "projective hypothesis" that this is indicative of Seymour's state of mind, shows that this has a low willingness to die. The willingness to die is there, but it is not high. By contrast, the willingness to die calculation for Seymour's actual suicide is much higher. Something caused that difference between the two values.

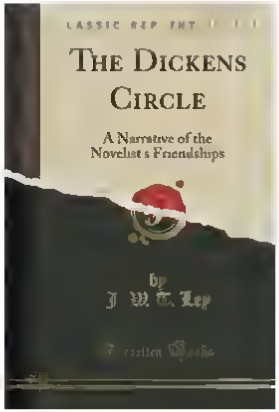
(Continued on next slide.)

- And, as I said in my previous reply, it would be perverse not to look at the meeting with Dickens as a candidate for the cause, when there is **no evidence at all of anything else being a proximate cause** - no evidence of blackmail, or threats, for instance. Incidentally, Cutter doesn't mention homosexuality, because in *Death and Mr Pickwick* that assertion about Seymour is made for the first time. As I have said before, there are indications that Seymour was gay - but it is unlikely that there will be proof, because Seymour was not going to confess to something which was a capital offence. (Continued on next slide.)



- I TOTALLY agree that suicide is not caused by one person It is obviously the result of many factors, and you can see very clearly in *Death and Mr Pickwick* that I set out these factors over several hundred pages, including some which Cutter had no knowledge of – for instance, the suicide of Edward Dayes, which as far as I am aware nobody has ever mentioned before in the context of Seymour's life But the proximate cause of Seymour's suicide – the thing which would make a willingness to die function jump – has only one obvious candidate unless further evidence turns up: the meeting with Dickens. And until someone writes another paper about Seymour's suicide in a peer reviewed journal the fact remains that Cutter's analysis is the most extensive analysis there is. Hardly any Dickensians even know about the paper's existence, and that is appalling. And regarding your own knowledge of Cutter's paper – I did not say that you did not know of Cutter's paper, but I did say that you totally failed to point it out. But I am very glad to hear that you do know of the paper, and applaud you for it.

- John I expect I will be criticised for having the gall to provide a view of an academic paper I am not on facebook but I did glance at Jarvis's facebook page which has a lot of Dickens Fellowship bashing on it, including of me, with Jarvis, without knowing anything about me, inferring my understanding is superficial and that I haven't heard of Cutter's paper (wrong); and another post accusing me and all Fellowship members of being 'pseudo-religious' nutcases where Dickens is concerned I don't think such attacks are in any way helpful They are in fact disrespectful, and they certainly won't encourage people to step forward to discuss the issues as Jarvis claims he wants them to Also, I have to point out (again) that I have never been to a Fellowship meeting, never met any of my fellow Dickensians, and do not in any way speak on behalf of the Fellowship I doubt the Fellowship would want to be associated with my ramblings anyway I hope that's clear to anyone who wants to bash my thoughts



- SJ. It is not Dickens Fellowship "bashing" to point out the sad truth that very few Dickensians have even heard of Cutter. Furthermore, I don't believe it is fair at all to say that there is a "lot" of Fellowship "bashing" on the facebook page - but I will certainly criticise Fellowship members like JWT Ley of the 1920s, and with good reason. Incidentally, I used to be a member of the Fellowship, a very active one, but resigned under circumstances which I shall not mention here, but many people know why I resigned, and my reasons for leaving.

- I would be happy to continue this conversation with you, if you want to do so, but as I have said on two previous occasions on this thread I am very aware that I have been advised that an author should not respond to reviews, so I would prefer to talk about this outside the blog. I would be happy to exchange emails with you or anyone else on any aspect of *Death and Mr Pickwick*. (Note: I did not hear from John again.)

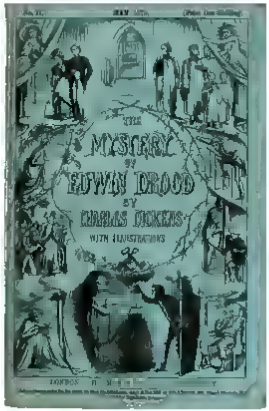
September 16

- Here is the great Peter Stadlera's latest post, which relates to the closing days of Dickens's life. In an early version of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I did cover Dickens's last days, but this was cut out in the final version of the manuscript,

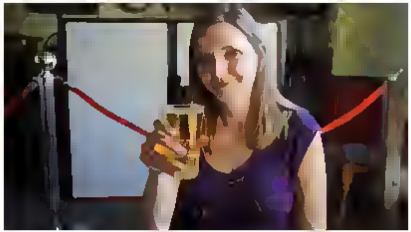
CHARLES DICKENS' CHALET
THIS CHALET ONCE STOOD AT GADS
HILL PLACE HIGHAM IT WAS USED AS A
SUMMER STUDY BY CHARLES DICKENS
FROM 1863 UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 1870
HE WROTE HIS LAST WORDS IN ITS
UPPER ROOM

- "On today's stroll we have a look at the Swiss Chalet.

- "It was given as a gift to Dickens by his friend, actor and theatre manager Charles Fechter. It arrived at Dickens' home at Gad's Hill in 94 pieces. Dickens had the chalet erected on the opposite side of the road from Gad's Hill and later had a tunnel built under the Dover Road so that he could more easily access the chalet. He used the upper floor of the chalet as a study and wrote his last lines there on the day he died in June 1870. After Dickens' death the chalet spent time at the Crystal Palace in Sydenham where it could be toured for a small admission. Later it was moved to Cobham Park.



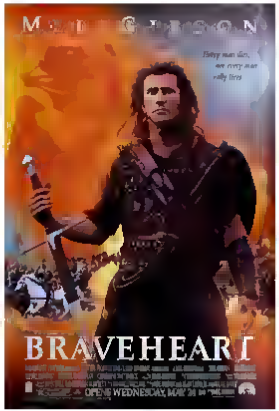
- "In the 1960s the chalet was restored and moved to its present location in the garden behind Eastgate house where John Jasper courted Rosa Budd in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. I hope you enjoyed today's episode. Tomorrow we will hear of Charles Dickens's final readings and death. Cheers!"



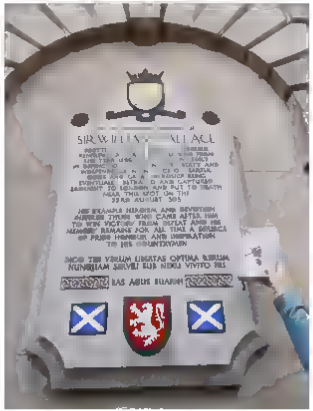
September 17

- This is one of my most significant posts, because it represents a discovery I have made since finishing the book - and if I had known about this before, it would certainly have altered *Death and Mr Pickwick*.
- Close to St Bartholomew's Hospital in Smithfield, London is the street of Little Britain, and in Seymour's time the part of the street closest to the hospital was called Duke Street.

- In this street, Seymour was apprenticed to the pattern designer Thomas Vaughan.
- However, recently when I was googling Smithfield, I discovered one highly significant fact...



- Just a stone's throw from where Seymour was apprenticed, William Wallace - Braveheart - was executed by Edward I. As readers of *Death and Mr Pickwick* will know, I suggest that Seymour's pseudonym, Shortshanks, is derived from Edward I's nickname, Longshanks, and is a coded allusion to Seymour's homosexuality: the "Short" makes one think of someone of smaller status than Edward I, but related - in other words, Edward I's son, who later became Edward II, the most famous homosexual in English history. At the same time, the pseudonym's echo of Cruikshank, the nineteenth-century cartoonist, creates a perfect mask for hiding the homosexuality.



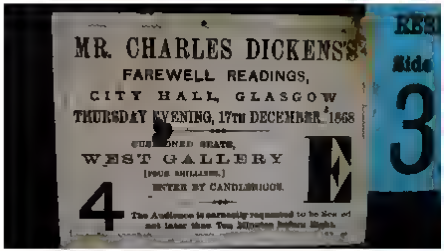
- The pseudonym is both an advertisement and a cover for gay activity, at a time when being gay was a capital offence. This much I had worked out - but now I know the likely reason that Seymour came to be aware of Longshanks in the first place.

- I stood in the few places in the Little Britain area that Seymour would have recognised—St Bartholomew's Church.

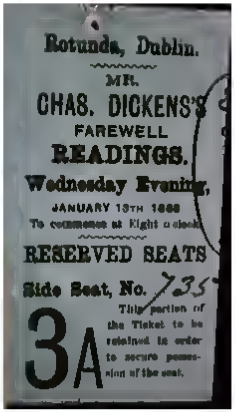
- ...next to a tombstone, beside a tree...There isn't much left that he would have known. Even so, these photos represent an occasion when I felt truly connected to *Death and Mr Pickwick*'s main character.

September 17

- Peter Stadlera's tour now moves on to the subject of Dickens's final public readings. This topic again was something that I was going to include in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, but which I eventually cut out of the book
- "Today we have a look at Dickens' final reading years and death in 1870. From Dec. 1867 to April 1868 he undertook a reading tour of America which earned him 19,000 pounds.
-

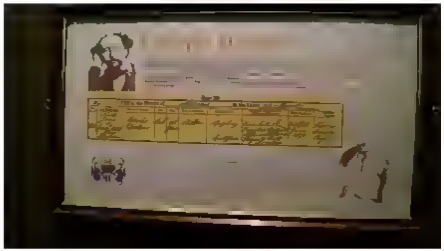


- "On Dickens's return to England, and in declining health, he began a farewell tour of Britain in October 1868.



- "This tour included a new addition, a very passionate and dramatic performance of the murder of Nancy from *Oliver Twist*. Many believe that the energy expended in this performance, which he insisted on including even as his health worsened, hastened his early death on June 9, 1870.

- "Mark Twain saw Dickens perform in January 1868 at the Steinway Hall in New York. Please read his impression of Dickens' reading firsthand:
- charlesdickenspage.com/twain_on_dickens.html



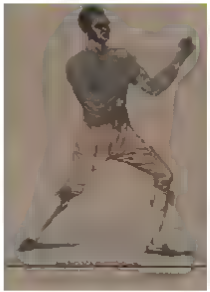
- "I took a picture of the death certificate of Charles Dickens. He died of apoplexy.

- "When writing this post I was listening to Sparks *When Do I Get To Sing My Way*"... in Heaven or Hell... and had to think about *The Pickwick Papers* and Stephen's novel *Death and Mr Pickwick*....
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8dqCQ2MHfQ

September 17

- Peter Stadlera has also just found this rare piece of Pickwickiana - a leather postcard, mentioning *The Pickwick Papers*, in the collection of The Grolier Club. I visited the Grolier Club's New York HQ when I was doing research for *Death and Mr Pickwick*. The Grolier Club is probably the most distinguished society of bibliophiles in the world, and their archives contain huge amounts of material on book auctions. I tried to see whether I could find any clues there to the missing Seymour manuscript, the 'Holy Grail' of my research. Alas, it was another dead end...
- The Grolier Club say about this card, "For our Dickens lovers! this leather post card recently arrived as part of a gift of early American publisher's ephemera from Grolier Club member, Vic Zoschak (Tavistock Books). It probably dates to the first decade of the twentieth century."

September 17



- Luke G. Williams, the author of the great new book *Richmond Unchained*, about Bill Richmond, the world's first black sporting superstar has just informed me that portraits of Bill and his protege Tom Molineaux are on display in Simon Schama's "Face of Britain" exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery.

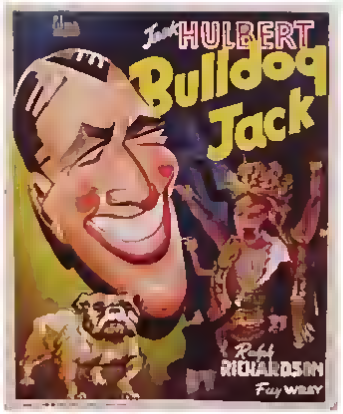
September 17

- Don't forget that the official Canadian launch of *Death and Mr Pickwick* is on September 22nd. However, some copies have arrived early, and here is a picture of the novel at Shelf Life Books, Calgary.

September 18

- There is a section of *Death and Mr Pickwick* set in 1934 where I describe a project to make a movie of *The Pickwick Papers* - a project which was abandoned because the movie was "not considered box-office". This effectively marked the end of the Pickwickian era, the period of almost a century when *The Pickwick Papers* was the most famous novel in the world.
- The director of the intended movie was Walter Forde, who died in Los Angeles in 1984.

- I do remember reading a newspaper clipping in the Dickens Museum which said that Forde felt some connection to Dickens, because a relative of his, a Miss Woolford, was a famous horseback rider who performed at Astley's equestrian circus, and she was mentioned in Dickens's *Sketches by Boz*.



- You'll see here some posters of Forde's movies which caught my eye. I have always felt that there is a certain "collectability" which lies at the heart of both *The Pickwick Papers* and *Death and Mr Pickwick*: both novels have a profusion of details, and this provokes the urge to associate with those details in some way. I want to find out more about Walter Forde, and I would certainly consider buying posters of his movies specifically because of his connection to *Death and Mr Pickwick*.

ROME EXPRESS

Edgar Wallace's
GREATEST THRILLER
The PHANTOM STRIKES
SONNIE HALE · WILFRID LAWSON
LOUISE HENRY
A M-G-M RELEASE

EL TREN FANTASMA
Boy Hamilton
ASKEY
Richard Stephen
MURDOCH
DIRECTOR
WALTER FORDE

BREATHTAKING ROMANCE OF THE SLAVE GIRL WHOSE BEAUTY ENSLAVED HER MASTERS
GAUMONT BRITISH
Chu Chin Chow
ANNA MAY WONG

Inspector
HORNLEIGH ON
HOLIDAY
HARKER
SIM
20th CENTURY FOX

PETERVILL
PRODINES S.A

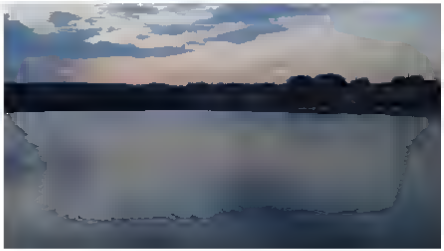
THEY SOUGHT TO SMASH THE BRITISH EMPIRE
BUT
THE FOUR JUST MEN

SONS OF THE SEA
REDGRAVE
HOBSON
WALTER FORDE
WARNER BROS.

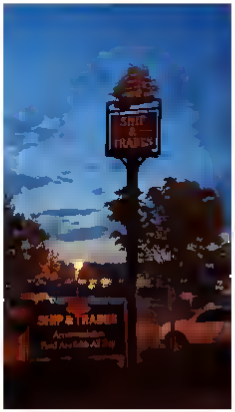
SONNIE HALE
Jimmy O'DEA · DRIVER
Let's be FAMOUS

September 18

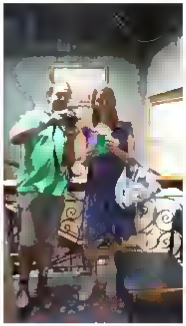
- Peter Stadlera's tour comes to an end with this final post. Thank you very much Peter! You have revived the tradition of *Pickwick* excursions!
- "Yesterday we saw the death certificate of Dickens and thus ends our long Pickwickian Tour with its last stop in Rochester. Before we go let's have a look at *Dickens' Dream* with focus on Mr Pickwick and Sam Weller...

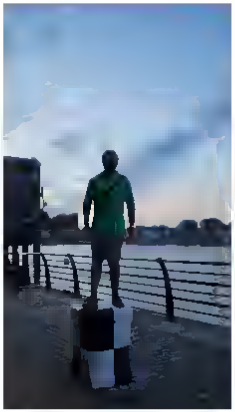


- "...have a look at the river...

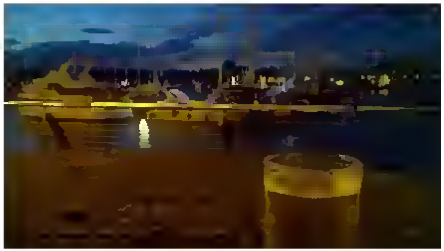


- "...and the Ship and Trades, our fine accommodation...





- "...see me standing on a column...



- “Cheers and thank you very much for following us and watching our posts. We'll be back with another tour I promise!”